

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences  
Business and Culture, Imatra  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality  
Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

La Linh Giang  
Nobel Mohammad

# **Employment for International Students after Graduation from Universities of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Hospitality Degree Programmes in Finland: Expectations and Obstacles**

Thesis 2014

## **Abstract**

La Linh Giang; Nobel Mohammad

Employment for International Students after Graduation from Universities of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Hospitality Degree Programmes in Finland: Expectations and Obstacles, 70 pages, 2 appendices

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Business and Culture, Imatra

Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality

Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Thesis 2014

Instructors: Mari Tuukkanen, International Officer, MBA, Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, International Office

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the expectations that international students graduating (or going to graduate in a short period of time) from Universities of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Hospitality degree programmes hold about their employment and the obstacles they face when entering the industry of Tourism and Hospitality in Finland.

In theoretical part, the main idea was to define some concepts and issues related to this thesis work, including: employment, tourism, hospitality, University of Applied Sciences system and theories of expectations and obstacle factors. The background studies of Finnish tourism labour market situation and international students in Finland were also retrieved.

Multiple research methods were applied, including both quantitative and qualitative researches. Quantitative data were obtained through a survey with 30 responses and were analysed by IBM SPSS Statistics software. Qualitative data were collected with 6 semi-structure interviews.

In short, the results of the study show firstly that international students graduating from universities of applied sciences in Finland hold mostly positive expectations about their employment after graduation, including high salary, good working condition and working in their own professional field. However, it is stated also that their expectation of getting job easily is not high. Secondly, the biggest obstacles these international students have to face in entering tourism and hospitality industries in Finland after graduation is their Finnish language skills. The lack of other languages skills, experiences, recommendation and high competition are also difficulties. Last but not at least, it is recommended that universities of applied sciences should provide more support and have more connections with organizations and companies offering jobs after graduation for international students.

Further researches could replicate this study in other groups of students or focus more on employers' perspectives in employing international students.

Keywords: employment, international students, universities of applied sciences, tourism, hospitality, expectations, obstacles

## Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	4
1.1	Objectives and main questions .....	5
1.2	Scope and limitations.....	6
1.3	Thesis structure .....	8
2	Tourism - hospitality industry employment and University of Applied Sciences education in Finland .....	9
2.1	Finland at a glance .....	11
2.2	Tourism and Hospitality .....	13
2.2.1	Definition of Tourism and Hospitality .....	13
2.2.2	Tourism and Hospitality Industries .....	14
2.2.3	Finnish tourism and hospitality industries.....	16
2.3	Bachelor level in universities of applied sciences in Finland.....	19
2.4	International students.....	20
2.4.1	International students' employment expectations and obstacles...	22
2.4.2	International students in Finland.....	25
3	Research methodology .....	29
3.1	Research design .....	30
3.1.1	Purpose of the research .....	30
3.1.2	Research strategies .....	31
3.1.3	Research method choices.....	32
3.1.4	Time horizons.....	33
3.1.5	The credibility of the research findings.....	33
3.1.6	The ethics of research design .....	34
3.2	Research tactics .....	34
3.2.1	Research samples.....	34
3.2.2	Data collecting process .....	36
3.2.3	Data analysis process .....	38
4	Research Result .....	40
4.1	Quantitative result.....	40
4.1.1	Characteristic of respondents.....	40
4.1.2	Descriptive statistics of expectations and obstacles.....	48
4.2	Qualitative result .....	54
4.2.1	Characteristic of the interviewees.....	54
4.2.2	Expectations and obstacles.....	56
4.2.3	Recommendation for universities of applied sciences.....	60
5	Conclusion and Recommendation .....	63
	References.....	66

# 1 Introduction

Finland is known worldwide as one of the best places to study with no tuition fee on all level of study from primary-education to higher education (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture a). Due to that fact, recently, more and more students from all over the world have come to Finland to study. According to CIMO (Centre of International mobility), there were over 19,100 international degree students (in both universities and universities of applied sciences) studying in Finland in higher education in 2012, 40% of those from Asia and 14% from Africa. The majority nationalities were Russian, Nepal, Vietnam, China and Nigeria (2012b). In another document also taken from CIMO (2012a), it is stated that there are two thirds of the students graduated from higher education in Finland (in which the amount of University of Applied Sciences' bachelors account for 40%) have tendency to stay in Finland in 2007. However, there was no current document or study about the nature of employment of the international students so it is uncertain if they have jobs corresponding to their education. Overall, let us assume that the statistic have not experienced a dramatic change in six years, so every year, about 1,000 international students graduate from Universities of Applied Sciences and about 700 out of those stay in Finland and getting employment for them is absolutely a considerable matter.

Tourism and hospitality are considered as major industries in the world, which are "in large part responsible for much economic growth, balance of payments, employments and regional balance in their countries" ( Lockwood and Medlik 2001, p.viii). In Finland, even though Tourism and Hospitality are not the main focused industries, they still account for 2.3 % tourism (The official travel site of Finland 2012) and 3.8 % hospitality (MARA 2014) to the GDP of the country and offer thousands of job opportunities every year. Understanding of the growth of these industries as well as because of the practical characteristic of them, most of the Universities of applied sciences in Finland have offered the degree programmes in these particular industries. Even though the majority of those are still taught in Finnish, there are about five Universities of applied sciences in Finland having degree programmes in Tourism and Hospitality fields conducted in English for foreign students. (Finnips 2014.)

Even though there are some earlier studies about the situations of international students in general in Finland, the employment of the international students is still an unexplored topic in Tourism and Hospitality degree programmes after graduation from the universities of applied sciences in these particular industries. Therefore, in this thesis, the main purpose is to create a brief picture of international students' expectation as well as difficulties that they face after graduation when entering Tourism and Hospitality industries.

## **1.1 Objectives and main questions**

The main objectives of this thesis are: (1) to investigate the expectations that international students in Tourism and Hospitality degree programmes in University of Applied Sciences have of their employment after graduation, (2) to investigate the obstacles that they might face in entering the industries and (3) to explore the ways of overcoming these obstacles by the students and how universities of applied sciences can help them.

This thesis, besides answering the personal curiosity of the authors - who are also the international students studying in Tourism and Hospitality degree programmes in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences about their future career situations, can be used as a reference for other international students in Finland as well as Universities of applied sciences or other organizations that are interested in employment of international students in Tourism and Hospitality in Finland.

Based on these purposes, the aim of the thesis is to answer the main following questions:

1. What are the expectations of international students graduated or soon graduating from Universities of applied sciences in Tourism and Hospitality programmes in Finland of their future employment in these particular industries?
2. What are the obstacles faced by these students when entering the industries?
3. How these students can overcome these obstacles and how Universities of applied sciences and other organizations can support them?

## **1.2 Scope and limitations**

The scope of this thesis is only limited to international students who have graduated or going soon graduating from Universities of applied sciences in degree programmes related to tourism and hospitality that have desires of staying in Finland and entering tourism and hospitality industry. Moreover, the research only targets on international students who have no previous background study in Finland and just start their studies from Universities of applied sciences level.

There are some limitations that might affect the validity and reliability of this thesis. Firstly, when starting this research, the authors had thought about getting information about graduated students through student offices of these Universities of applied sciences. However, this information was neither available to be accessed nor up-to-date that led to the difficulty in contacting these people and defining if they were the right people for the research. The second channel used here was more reliable but also more time consuming: the authors tried to contact with friends from different universities of applied sciences and asked them for help in finding the people that they know might have the right characteristics for the research.

Second limitation is that the data collected shows that most of the respondents come from the third world countries outside of Europe, especially Vietnam and Russia. In their case, one of the common barriers faced is the difficulties in documents related to resident and working permission – which seems to be not a big problem to European citizens. This research is driven by the limitations of the non-Europeans as well as the qualities of the students from these particular cultures.

The third limitation recorded is: because respondents came mostly from friend channel, the majority of them are from Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and some other particular universities of applied sciences. Hence, the results of the research might be affected by these characteristics holding by students from these universities of applied sciences.

Finally, let us assume that the findings are just valid in the time frame of the research. It is important that readers keep updating the information related to the current situation.

### 1.3 Thesis structure

In this section, thesis structure is presented briefly in figure 1 in order to give the reader a clear vision about the whole thesis.

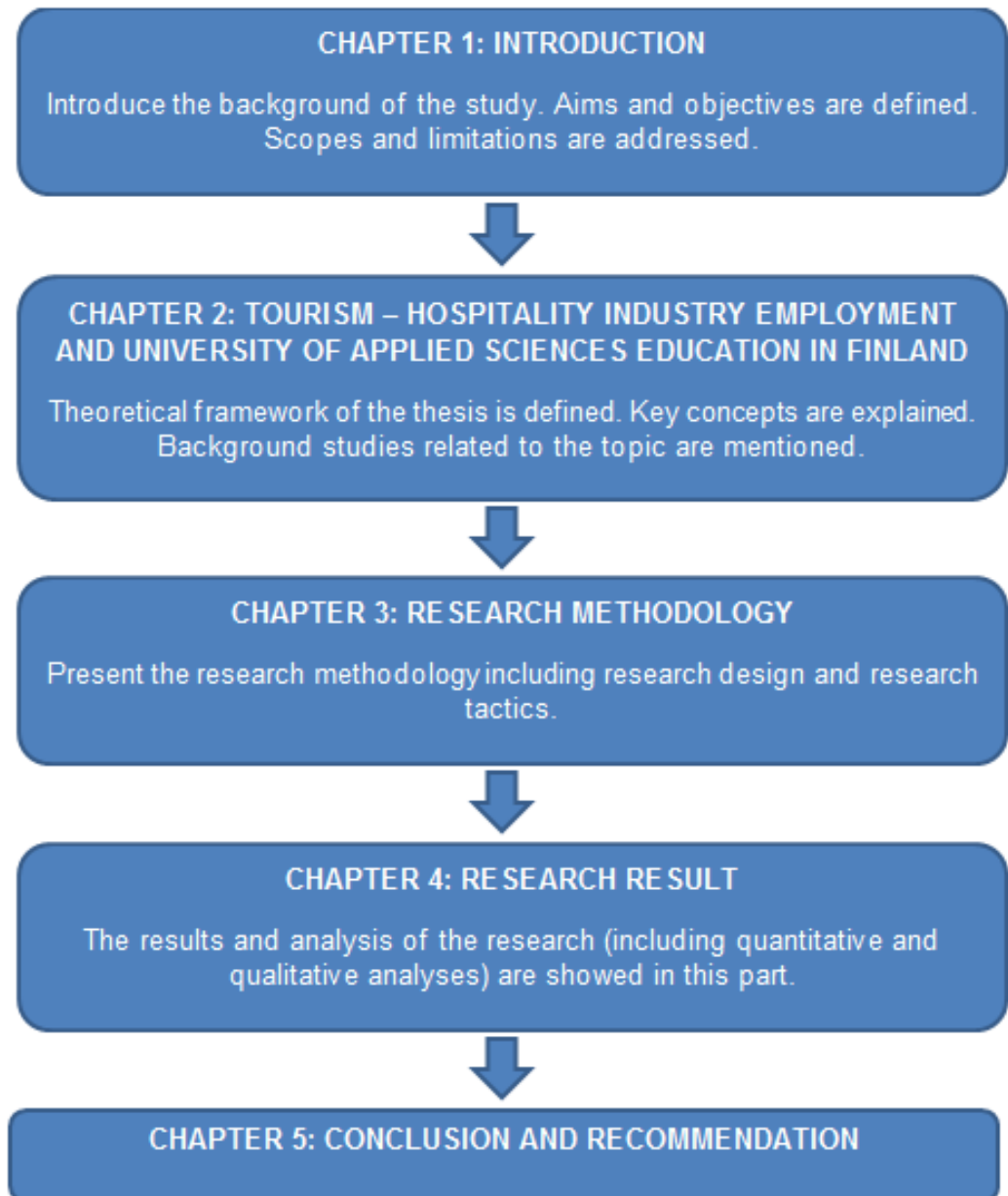


Figure 1. Thesis structure.



## **2 Tourism - hospitality industry employment and University of Applied Sciences education in Finland**

In a limited context of a bachelor's thesis, in this chapter, the authors only introduce some key words and concepts concerning the research.

First of all, the concept of 'employment' should be clarified. 'Employment' is one of the fundamental concepts that play important roles in recent world economy system. However, it is difficult to find a numerical definition of 'employment'. According to Oxford English dictionary, 'employment' is a "state of having paid work". The person who is called 'employee' is "an individual who works part time or full time under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, expressed or implied, and has recognized rights and duties". (Business Dictionary.)

According to the length of the working period, employment is divided into four different types, which are *regular*, *short term temporary*, *long term temporary* and *seasonal employment* (ASU 2008). In the limitation of this study, despite of the seasonality of tourism and hospitality industries, the authors only mention about regular employment, which means a position which is considered to be a part of the established staff compliment, which will be recurring from year to year. (ASU 2008.)

Employment brings various meanings to people's lives. Firstly, it is undeniable that employment, or 'working', provides people for basis subsistence needs and decent living conditions. However, this is not the only function of it. Work, above all, "is an activity through which an individual fits into the world, creates new relations, uses his talents, learns and grows develops his identity and sense of belonging" (Estelle 2004, p.3). In other words, employment or working makes people feel that they are "able to do something". For human being, the sense of "being able to do something" makes it visible that "I", as a subject, is active in the world, that "I" "exist". "Therefore," Estelle (2004) noted "working is a meaningful way to prove one's existence, and hopefully, that it is worth to be lived". Because of those reasons, it is understandable when working has become a

human instinct and the central of many cultures, despite each culture has its own values and concepts of it.

To economy, employment is a vital element. The growth of employment has strong effects on the economy and vice versa. However, the world today has recently had to face a big problem of unemployment. Unemployment (or phenomenon of jobless growth) happens when jobs are not created fast enough, or in other words, “when employment does not grow enough while economic is growing” (Herman 2011). Pingfan Hong, Chief of the Global Economy Monitoring Unit for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has noted: “The employment situation remains a key policy challenge in a large number of economies, as the world economy continues to expand below its potential”. Unemployment rate in the European area has reached an all-time high and is estimated to average 12.8 per cent in 2014. In the US, this rate has positively fallen down but it still remains high by historical standards. This number is expected to reach 7 per cent in 2014. The conditions are even worse in Southern European area, as Greece and Spain have over a quarter of their working population jobless. At the same time, long-term unemployment (over one year) in developed economies stood at more than 35 per cent by July 2012, affecting 17 million workers. (United Nations 2013.) The figure 2 below shows the youth unemployment rate in the area of Europe and other relevant economies.

Youth Unemployment 2009-2012: Europe & Other Relevant Economies (%)

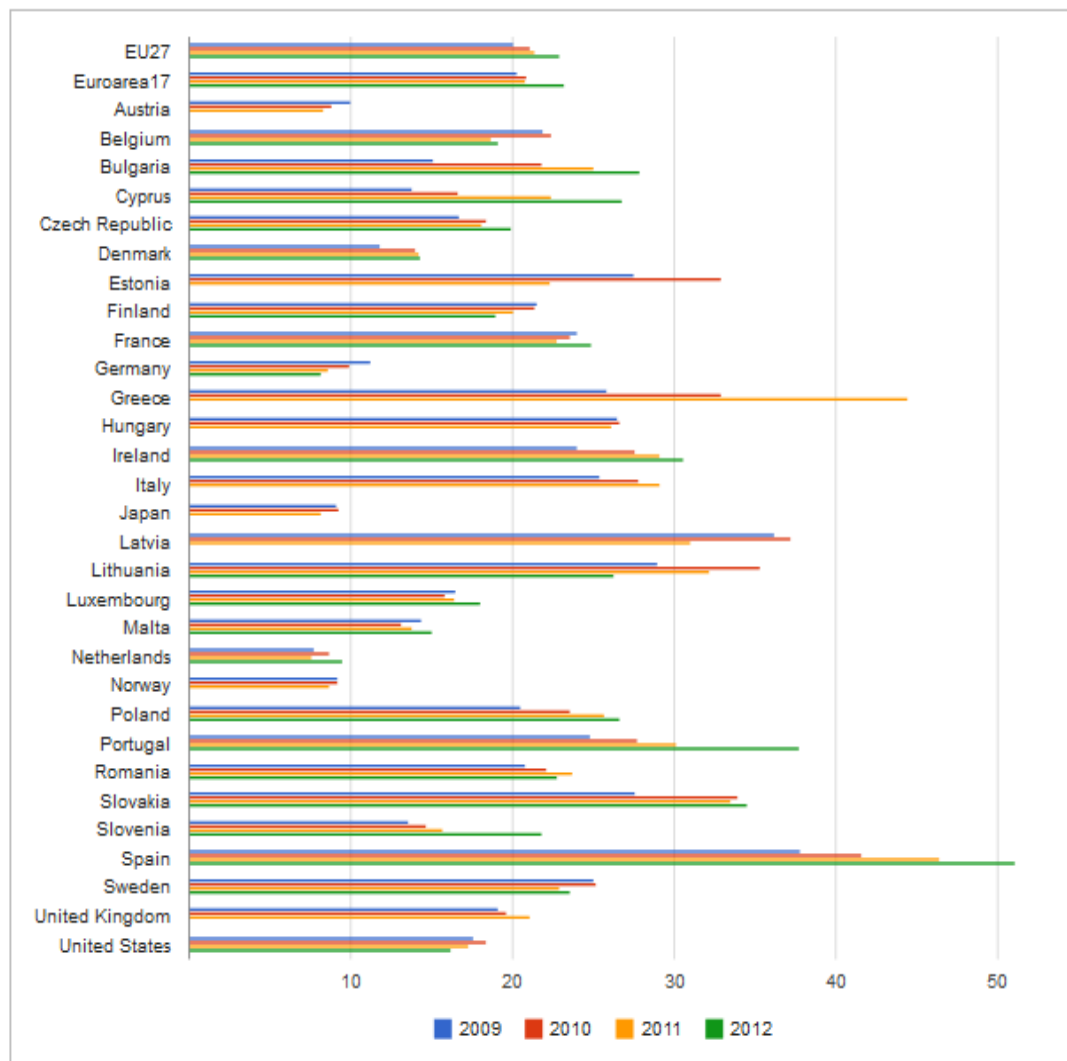


Figure 2. Youth unemployment 2009-2012: Europe and other relevant economies (Pasquali 2012)

In comparison with the different economies in Europe as well as in the entire world, Finland actually has remained a quite safe degree of unemployment with 7.9% until December 2013, in which long-term unemployment accounted only for 1.6% (Trading Economy).

## 2.1 Finland at a glance

In this section, some key figures about Finland as well as its society's attitude towards foreign workers are given in order to provide the readers with brief ideas about this studied country.

According to 'The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited' (TEIUL), Finland is officially known as Republic of Finland or "Suomi" in Finnish language. The country locates in the Northern of Europe and constitutes a part of Scandinavia region with the total area of approximately 330 square kilometres plus 34,330 square kilometres inland water. Finland is bordered with Norway in the north, Russia in the east, Sweden and Gulf of Bothnia in the west, Baltic Sea and Gulf of Finland in the south (TEIUL 2012). The capital city of Finland is Helsinki (since 1812) and also the biggest city of the country in term of population. Official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish.

The total population of Finland reached the amount of 5.4 million in 2012 and is expected to reach 6.1 million in 2050 (Population Reference Bureau 2012, p. 8). One of the noticeable problems being highlighted about Finnish society is the rapidly aging population. "It is expected that in Finland only the age-group of 65-years old and older is growing and the others will dismiss" (Heikkilä 2012, p.2). On the other hand, the birth rate of Finland was reported to remain under the global average of 19.4 births / 1000 population with just 10.3 births/ 1000 population (United Nation 2013). These factors lead to a shortage of internal labour market of Finland and at the same time raise the burden on public fund because pensions will demand more than 12% of 2030 GDP (MarketLine 2012). When the baby boomers retire, Finland will have to face a problem of lacking labour force to replace them and one of the solution suggested was employing immigrants along with others subjects like elderly, unemployed and disable. (Heikkilä 2012) Because of this background, Finland has become a country of immigration. People have been moving to Finland to "find better job opportunities" and that create a noticeable wave of immigration occurred in the 1990s. (Heikkilä 2012.)

Recently, Finnish society and its government have been continuing experiencing dramatic changes in the component of society population caused by the growing immigrant flows from different parts of the world. The number of immigration increased more than five-fold in a ten-year period with 2,584 persons in 2000 and 16,821 in 2011 (Statistic Finland 2011). Moreover, according to Studyinfinland.fi, there were 14 thousand international students choose studying

in Finland under Finnish Universities and Universities of applied sciences. This phenomenon, undeniably, has been providing Finland with a very potential source of international labour. Besides that, this occurrence also has an inevitable influence on the lifestyle and consumer behaviour of native Finnish society.

On the other hand, it has been reported that the percentage of Finnish people against increasing immigration has also increased rapidly, from 36% in 2007 to 60% in 2009 (Sundberg 2011:50, p.965-969). This negative attitude raised within the Finnish society toward immigrant labours prevents the country from improving its skill – shortage situation in labour market; therefore enhance the pressure from aging population on social welfare.

These mentioned factors have both positive and negative effects on international student's situation in Finland as well as their employment motivations in the country. While the government and other organizations with authority try to support international students in entering the Finnish labour markets, these students still have to face many barriers built by the society.

## **2.2 Tourism and Hospitality**

In this section, the concepts of Tourism and Hospitality are explained separately in order to provide readers with basic ideas of these terms as well as these industries.

### **2.2.1 Definition of Tourism and Hospitality**

According to United Nations' World Tourism Organisation UNWTO, tourism is defined as "the activities of person travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited"(1995, p.1).

The term "usual place" in this case means the "place of normal residence or domicile" (Swain and Mishra 2012, p.5). Hence, tourism does not include trips within the area of one's habitation for instance a commute between residence

and workplace or a trip to collect items for household use. The purposes of tourism are various as long as it does not include “any earning activities arising from direct sales”. (Swain and Mishra 2012, p.5.) People can travel for leisure, business, religion, sport, health or other reasons. The journey, based on the definition, has to involve overnight stay and cannot be longer than one year. However, in some countries, it is also possible for foreigners to stay longer than one year period as tourists, “subject to fulfilment of certain conditions”(Swain 2012). Tourism is highly influenced by different factors including the nature conditions of the destination, seasonality, personal lifestyles, personal income or attitude of tourists.

In Oxford English Dictionary, ‘hospitality’ is defined basically as “the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers with liberality and goodwill”. However, Powers and Barrows, in their book “Introduction to management in the hospitality industry” (2006) have argued that the term ‘hospitality’ can be perceived in two separated perspectives: as a profession and as an industry. From the occupation point of view, ‘hospitality’ is determined as “the oldest of the human professions, involves making a guest, client, member or resident feel welcome and comfortable” (Power & Barrows 2006, p.4). On the other hand, if considering ‘hospitality’ as an industry, it is an entity constituted by variety of institutions such as accommodation , food and beverage and other services offered to people who stay away from home for different objectives of leisure or business to make it even more than common heritage and a commitment to “liberality & goodwill”.

### **2.2.2 Tourism and Hospitality Industries**

As can be seen clearly from the previous sub-chapters, tourism and hospitality strongly influence each other. The history of hospitality service is closely associated with the evolution of tourism business. These businesses are interdependent while ‘tourism’ refers to the activities of travelling to unusual places, ‘hospitality’ is basically the activities of supporting tourism by offering accommodations and services to tourists within these places.

In the recent time, due to the involvement of many different industries that support this sector, tourism industry is more diversified as it has grown strongly and provides a variety of services. Among all the elements of tourism, hospitality service is very important, which consists of accommodation and food services. These services play an important role in the development of tourism in a destination: The better the quality of hospitality service in one place is, the better image of that destination is built. Hence, it is not a surprise when hospitality services constitute a significant share in the total revenue and employment generation from tourism activities. Nowadays, due to the changes in customer demands, hospitality services have grown to a big industry that provides customers with a wide range of innovations in packages to meet the needs of customers in different services involving accommodation and food services with competitive price. Moreover, not only stop with leisure activities, the market of hospitality services is continuing emerging, including MICE (referring to *meetings, incentives, conferences and events*), which is a major segment of hospitality service. (Swain and Mishra 2012.)

### **Impact of tourism and hospitality industry on economy**

Tourism industry is one of the world's biggest industries, of which hospitality industry can be considered as a part. According to the WTTC's (World Travel and Tourism Council) report of 2013, tourism contributed \$6.6 trillion in economic activity and provided 261 million jobs (direct and indirect). The amount of jobs offered by tourism is 8.7% of the total employment and the sector's contribution accounts for 9.3% of the world total GDP in 2012. The numbers are expected to rise by 1.7% and 3.2% by 2013. Overall, the industry is estimated to provide more than 8.5 million new jobs annually until 2015.

The income of tourism comes generally from wages and salaries, interest, rent, sales and profit. In addition, tourism is known as a highly labour-intensive industry, in which the highest percentage of income is contributed by wages and salaries. The number of workers employed in hospitality services, representing hotels and restaurants is higher than in any other sectors of tourism industry. Other income sources of tourism are rent, sales, profit and taxes. The sources are generated by different subjects involving the industry for example landown-

ers for building, car parking, campsites, sellers or owners of accommodations or restaurants and government, etc. (Swain and Mishra 2012.)

## **Employment**

The growth of tourism and hospitality businesses creates three different types of employment including *direct*, *indirect* and *included*. Direct employment, such as jobs at hotels, is created as a result of visitor' expenditure on providing direct services to them while indirect employment is created to support the frontline personnel in providing services to tourists and included employment refers to jobs created as a result of expenditure by local residents by the money coming from tourism. Because of the nature of tourism industry which is known as "seasonal", a large amount of jobs offered are hourly and seasonal. This leads to the fact that a significant number of tourism jobs are temporary and part-time employment, which might be called the additional employment at the tourist destinations where tourism offers alternative employment opportunities to skilled, semi-skilled and even un-skilled workers. (Swain and Mishra 2012.)

Recently, criticism has been mentioned after the advent of Internet and the technological evolution about the decrease in recruitment, not only in tourism but in all the other industries. However, this change in tourism and hospitality businesses still can be considered as a positive point as at the same time, the sales are increased thank to technology and in such industries that human touch is inevitable, the variety of other jobs are created. (Swain and Mishra 2012.)

Another plus point of tourism and hospitality industries is its nature of being diversified and multicultural. It is easier for people with foreign backgrounds to get a job in the hospitality business compared to many other industries. Diverse language skills and sensitivity to cultural differences are important skills for professionals working in the hospitality sector.

### **2.2.3 Finnish tourism and hospitality industries**

There are not many growing industries in Finland but tourism sector is among the few which are growing. In 2012 Finland earned €13.3 million from tourism in



Finland. This figure includes foreign and domestic tourists. The foreign tourists formed 32 percent of the amount and it was €4.2 million. Tourism produced 2.7 percent of gross domestic product which is much more than the figures of metal industry and agriculture. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014)

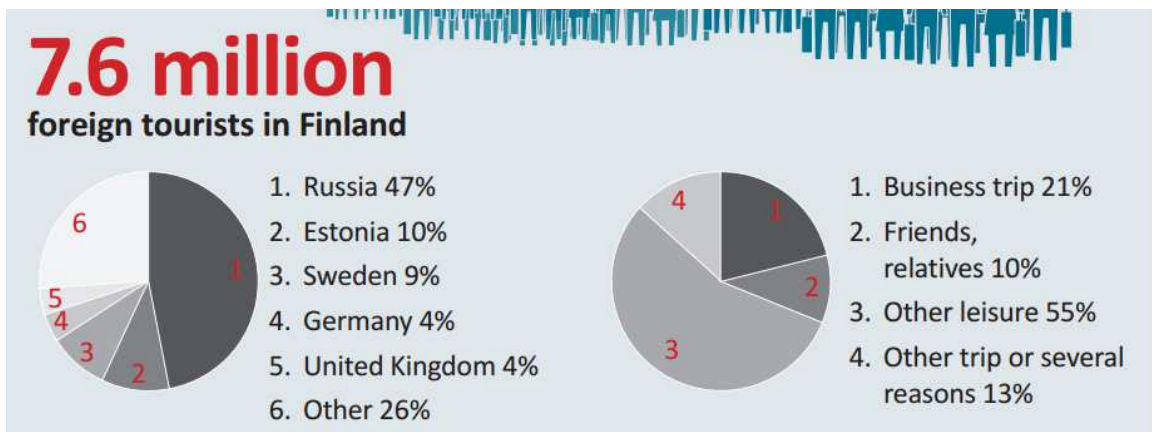


Figure 3. The paragraphs of foreign tourists in Finland in 2012 (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014)

As can be seen from figure 3, in 2012 most foreign tourists came from the neighboring countries. Overall, the amount of Russian tourists accounts for nearly half of the amount of all foreign tourists. Other major countries of origin were Germany and United Kingdom. A bit over a quarter of all the foreign tourists came from other countries. The most common reason for foreign tourists' trip was 'other leisure'. The figure was 55 percent of the listed reasons. The second most common reason was business trip with 21 percent. Other two categories, 'Friends, relatives' and 'other trip or several reasons' were rather equal with about 10 percent of the total amount. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014.)

Besides that, hospitality is also one of the growing industries in Finland. The Finnish hospitality sector accounts for 3.8% of Finland's GDP, which is even higher than banking and insurance or forest industry. The annual turnover of this sector is €11 billion. Hospitality industry also contributed over €5.2 billion of taxation to the Finnish government, which accounts for 5.4% of the total taxes and tax-related fees collected by Finnish government. (MARA 2012.)

In hospitality industry in Finland, there are responsibilities that are taken as guideline for organizations taking part in the industry, which are: *environmental*

*responsibility, economic responsibility and social responsibility.* Environmental responsibility refers to the effort of reducing ecological footprint of hospitality organizations, which means sustainable use of natural resources, reduction of waste, and prevention of other environmental damage. Economic responsibility refers to the responsibility of hospitality industry toward Finland's economy growth in general, which is expressed by the numbers of new jobs annually and the contribution to the country's GDP. In other words, tourism and hospitality are important for the vitality of the region's economy and the growth of tourism and hospitality industries also have significant effects on other industries. Finally, social responsibility is demonstrated in offering good opportunities of works to the society as well as great services that are safe and offer good value for money for the customers. (MARA 2012.)

### **Finnish labor market in tourism and hospitality industries**

In 2011, Tourism industry provided employment for 184,400 people. 30 percent of total amount of employees in tourism sector are categorized as young people. It is expected that by 2020, fifty thousand new jobs will be created in this field. Especially in remote areas tourism is very important. In tourism field there are altogether 27 000 companies. Among new companies program services are created most often. Tourism is a significant field because it creates employment also indirectly to other fields. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014)

At the same time, the hospitality sector in Finland provides employment for over 140,000 professionals, which accounts for over 11% of the million people working in the private sector. In addition, the hospitality industry's workforce increased by 35% between 1995 and 2012, while other traditional manufacturing industries decreased their workforces. (MARA 2012.)

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy forecasted that by 2020, the hospitality industry could employ more than 170,000 people and generate €7.5 billion in tax revenue (MARA 2012.)

### 2.3 Bachelor level in universities of applied sciences in Finland

Finnish higher education consists of two complementary sectors: *Universities* and *Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)*. Universities promote research and provide academic higher education based on research, whereas UAS, which are also known as polytechnics in other countries' education systems, provide professional or 'vocational' higher education. Education in UAS emphasises close contacts with business, industry and sector, especially at the regional level (Study in Finland 2014). The mission of UAS is "to train professionals in response to labour market needs and conduct R&D which supports instruction and promotes regional development in particular" (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture b).

According to Finnish Ministry of Education, the system of UAS is still considered new in Finland. "The first UAS started to operate on a trial basis in 1991-1992 and the first were made permanent in 1996. By 2000 all UAS 's were working on a permanent basis." (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture b.)

Degrees provided by UAS are designed to meet the changing requirements and developmental needs of the working world by having a pronounced occupational emphasis and by producing qualified graduates for various professional duties.

Nowadays, in Finland, there are 24 UAS institutions operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture, most of which are multi-field institutions and operate in several locations (Study in Finland 2014). UAS studies are provided in the following fields: *human and education, culture, social sciences, business and administration, nature sciences, technology, communication and transport, nature resource and environment, social services, health and sport and tourism, catering and domestic services*. (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture c.)

UAS award over 20,000 Bachelor's degrees and 200 UAS Master's degrees annually (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture b). In English, they provide some 100 Bachelor's degree programmes and over 20 Master's degree programmes (Study in Finland 2014). The degree studies consisted of core and professional studies, elective studies and final project (thesis). Practical on-job-

training is also a compulsory part of all the degrees. Students applying for UAS studies need to meet all the admission criteria and participants in entrance exams. UAS's also arrange adult education which is flexible and enable mature students (the group that accounts for above 20% of their students) to work alongside their studies. Tuition fees in degree education are free and the students are also able to apply for financial aid. (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture c)

## **2.4 International students**

In general an 'international student' can be defined as a student who is not a citizen or permanent resident holder of the country where he is studying. International students are students, who cross the borders especially with the intention to study (OCEDiLibrary 2014). It should be acknowledged that 'international student' and 'foreign student' are different terms. Foreign students differ from international students in that way that they may have come to the destination country for some other reason than studying (OECD 2008). Therefore, students, who have a permanent residence permit, are not classified as international students but fall into the category of foreign students (OECD 2008, Statistics Canada 2011). Despite the distinction, comparing the data is still somewhat problematic, because there are different ways of collecting data about enrolments, which vary between countries, thus figures are often inaccurate (University World News 2009). The figure 4 below shows the percentage of student enrolment or student mobility in different countries in the world.

Student mobility – *i.e.* international students who travelled to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study – ranges from below 1 to almost 18% of tertiary enrolments. International students are most numerous in tertiary enrolments in Australia, Austria, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

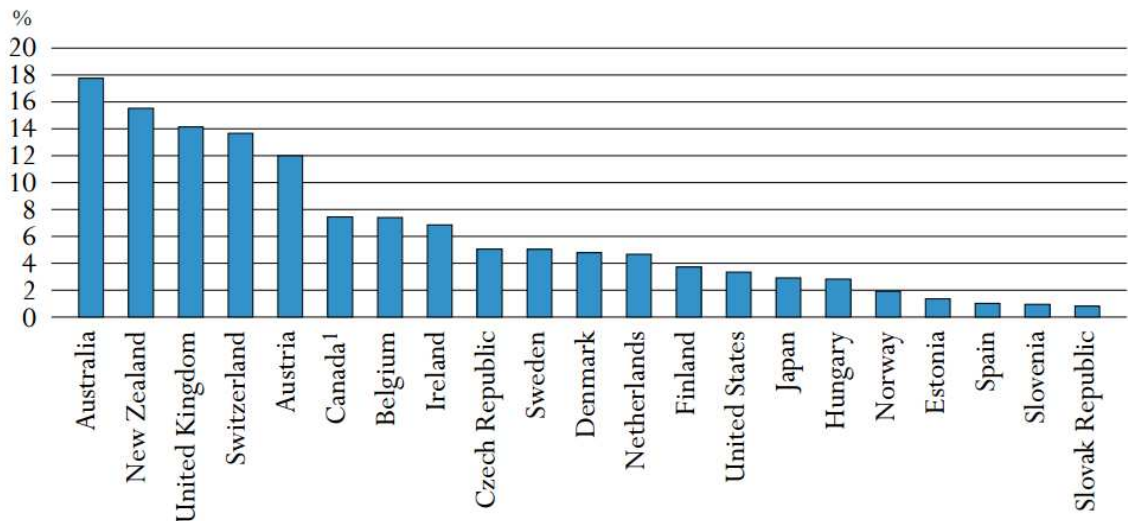


Figure 4. Student mobility in different countries. (OECD 2008)

In 2006 there were 2.9 million student enrolments to other than the country of their citizenship. Out of those 2.4 million were inside the OECD area. The total number of international students is currently increasing and from 2005 till 2006 there was an increase of 2.7%. Almost 50% of all the international students headed to France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. (OECD 2008.)

The leading nations in origin countries were Asian countries with the high share of 45.3% of the international students. Of all the international students, Chinese form 15.4% and Indian 5.4%. The second largest group are Europeans with the share of 23%, especially the EU citizens (15.7%). The top nations for outgoing students likewise destination nations in Europe are France and Germany. (OECD 2008.)

Most popular fields of study were humanities, arts, services, social sciences, business and law but the figures naturally vary a great deal between different countries (figure 5). In Finland for example, the fields of science, agriculture, engineering, manufacturing and construction had almost equal number of en-

rolments as humanities, arts, services, social sciences, business and law. The choice of field was related with for example language skills and the languages on which the degree programmes were offered. Respectively, the destination country was chosen on base of at least language skills, programme languages, tuition fees, immigration policy and the reputation of the country. Especially the language skills and the programme languages with tuition fees were major factors. Therefore, Nordic countries have been the choice of many as there are no tuition fees and many of the programmes are in English. (OECD 2008)

**Chart C3.4. Distribution of international students by field of education (2006)**

*Percentage of international tertiary students enrolled in different fields of education*

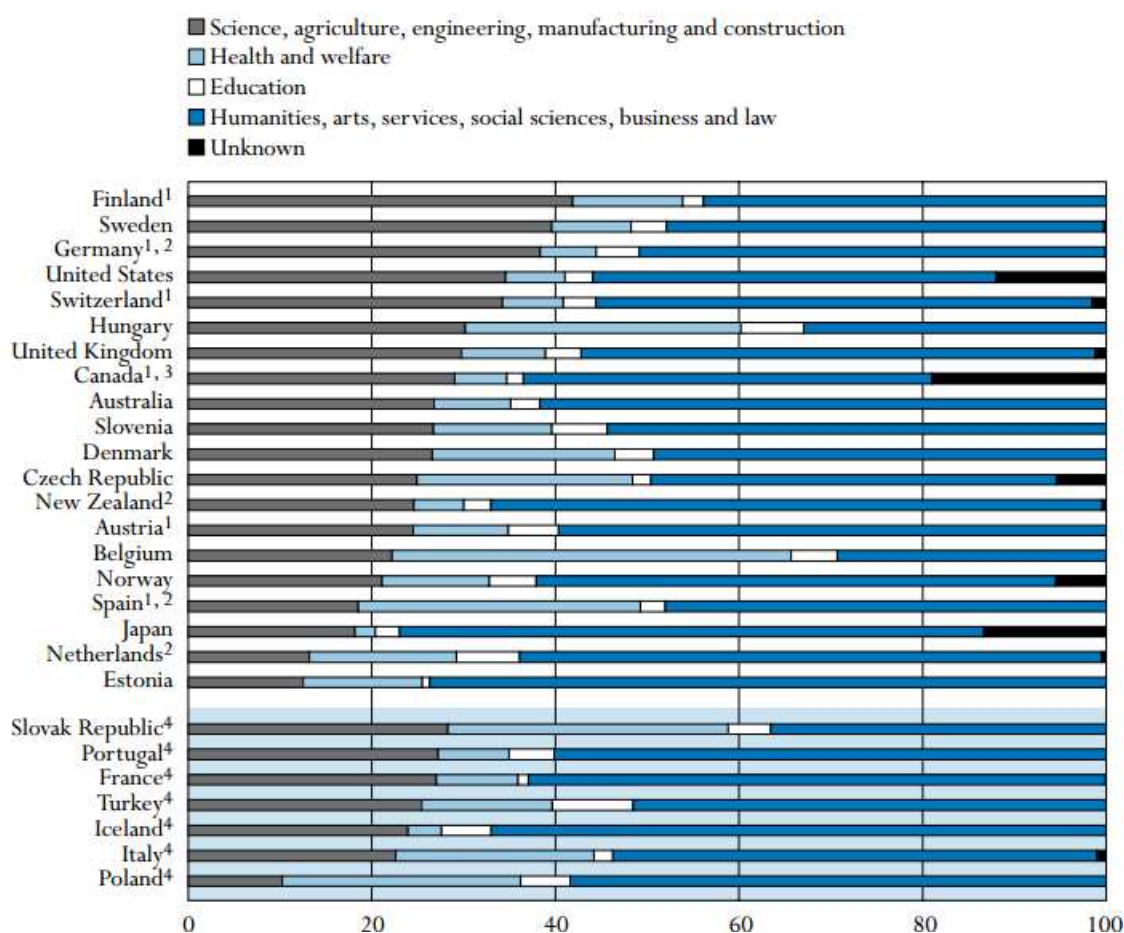


Figure 5. Distribution of international students by field of education (OECD 2008)

## 2.4.1 International students' employment expectations and obstacles

### International students' employment expectations

The employment expectations of international students are likely to vary from those of domestic students'. According to Dyck's research in Canada (2011), the international students have low expectations for succeeding in finding employment. However, there were a few features affecting the expectations either positively or negatively.

Firstly, parents' educational history has an impact on the international student's expectations. Father's education was shown to have a positive effect whereas mother's education created a negative impact. There were also differences in employment expectations between genders; males had higher expectations than females. International male students had also lower long-term employment expectations than the domestic male students or female international students. (Dyck 2011.)

In addition, current full-time employment was proven to raise future expectations. In this case, those international students, who were planning to work in the country of study, had lower expectations of employment. Also the field of study had an influence on the expectations. For example, because of the booming century of tourism industry, it is shown that tourism students have higher expectations about job prospects than art students. However, due to the seasonality and some robust non-monetary benefits of tourism plus the fact that only few of tourism students study master's degree, their expectation of salary is mostly low. (Dyck 2011.)

Lastly, it was also found that international students had lower salary expectations than the domestic ones (Dyck 2011.)

### **International students' employment obstacles**

The obstacles or challenges international students face when searching for employment are similar with the domestic students to some extent but the major challenges are due to their international student status. Some obstacles are dependent on the employment country but there are also international obstacles for non-native work seekers, such as language problems.

In countries, which provide international degree programmes, the local language is a major obstacle for employment (iStudent City 2009). Lack of sufficient language skills is a grand disadvantage against the natives. All languages can be learned but to reach the level of for instance Finnish to be able to compete with the natives, may take a while. In addition, language barrier might become an obstacle also when searching for the information about available position. Often for example websites have the English option but it is significantly less detailed than the native language version. (SER 2013.)

Another problem that international students face often is lack of experience (iStudent City 2009). The competition can be very rough and without previous work experience the international student is again in weaker position than natives, who may have already gained that valuable experience. Also the country and position where the experience was gained affect the employer's willingness to hire. International student's work experience in his home country might be less valued than the experience in the employment country. Besides experience, employers expect good recommendations and connections in the employment country from the work seeker (Virginia Tech 2013). Here again, the international students may face obstacles for example due to the lack of language skills and family and community ties, which could support in seeking employment and living in another country (The University of Sidney 2013.)

An essential issue for an international student is residence permit. Residence permit requirements are strict and may be difficult to meet. It may prove impossible to find an employer, who is willing to pay as much salary as required for residence permit's minimum initial salary (SER 2013). In addition, convincing the employer against the prejudices that hiring an international student is complicated might be challenging (iStudent City 2009.)

Another issue that international students face when seeking employment is the lack of cultural knowledge. Knowing the cultural habits, taboos and traditions is essential for any position but also already in the work seeking stage. In addition, stereotypes are still a factor, which hinders the employment possibilities of international students. These stereotypes are not necessarily as strong as racism



but general attitudes towards for example foreigners, which can show as lack of trust in hiring an international student. (Virginia Tech 2013)

At the end, international students may face also socio-cultural obstacles. An international student often lacks the family and community ties, which could support in seeking employment and living in another country.

#### **2.4.2 International students in Finland**

As mentioned in the Introduction, the number of international students in Finnish higher education is increasing steadily. In 2009, there were over 14,000 foreign degree students in Finland of which, more than 7,100 studied under Universities of applied sciences (Study in Finland 2009). In 2012, this amount was increased by 36% with 19,100 students. The majority of international students in Finnish higher education institutes are from China, Russia, Nigeria and Vietnam (CIMO 2012b.)

According to the Official Statistics of Finland there were 4 600 foreign students studying in a degree program in universities of applied sciences in Finland in 2006, which is 16 percent more than the previous year. This amount accounted for about 3.5% the whole population of UAS' students. Examined by continents, most students came from Asian and African countries and from EU and ETA countries. (Tilastokeskus 2007)

In 2012, Ahvenanmaa was the leader among areas with most foreign students studying in UAS in Finland. The majority of foreign students in Ahvenanmaa were citizens of Sweden. After Ahvenanmaa, the most popular places of study for foreign students were Southern Finland, West and Middle Finland and Lapland. Most foreign students in UAS's in the mainland were studying in the Southern Finland. There foreign students, at this point, formed 11 percent of all the students in UAS. Four most common nationalities in universities of applied sciences in Southern Finland were Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese and Nepali. (Tilastokeskus 2014.)

#### **Motivation to study in Finland**

Finland appears as an attractive destination for international students to have their higher education degree studies. In fact, 60% of respondents from a study among international students in Finland stated that Finland was their first choice when thinking about studying abroad and also 87% of the respondents would recommend Finland as a place to study for their friends and relatives. (Shumilova et al. 2012)

There are many reasons for this decision of studying in Finland but the most popular ones were stated as: *free of charge education, possibility to study in English, a chance to improve employability, a chance to explore a foreign country and reputation of higher education institution(s).*

According to Shumilova et al. (2012), Finland is also an attractive place to live and work in to many international students. Only 22% of the international graduates of 2009-2010 participating in the survey returned to their countries or moved elsewhere. Statistics Finland data also showed that 67% of international graduates were staying in Finland one year after graduation. However, not all of those students who wanted to stay in Finland were able to; some of those had to leave due to the obstacles of finding a job.

### **International graduates in Finland**

The employment rate of the participants in the study by Shumilova is 70%. Among that, 38.4% are a fixed-term full time job, 33.3% have a permanent full-time job while 3.2% have self-employed by their own initiative (figure 6).

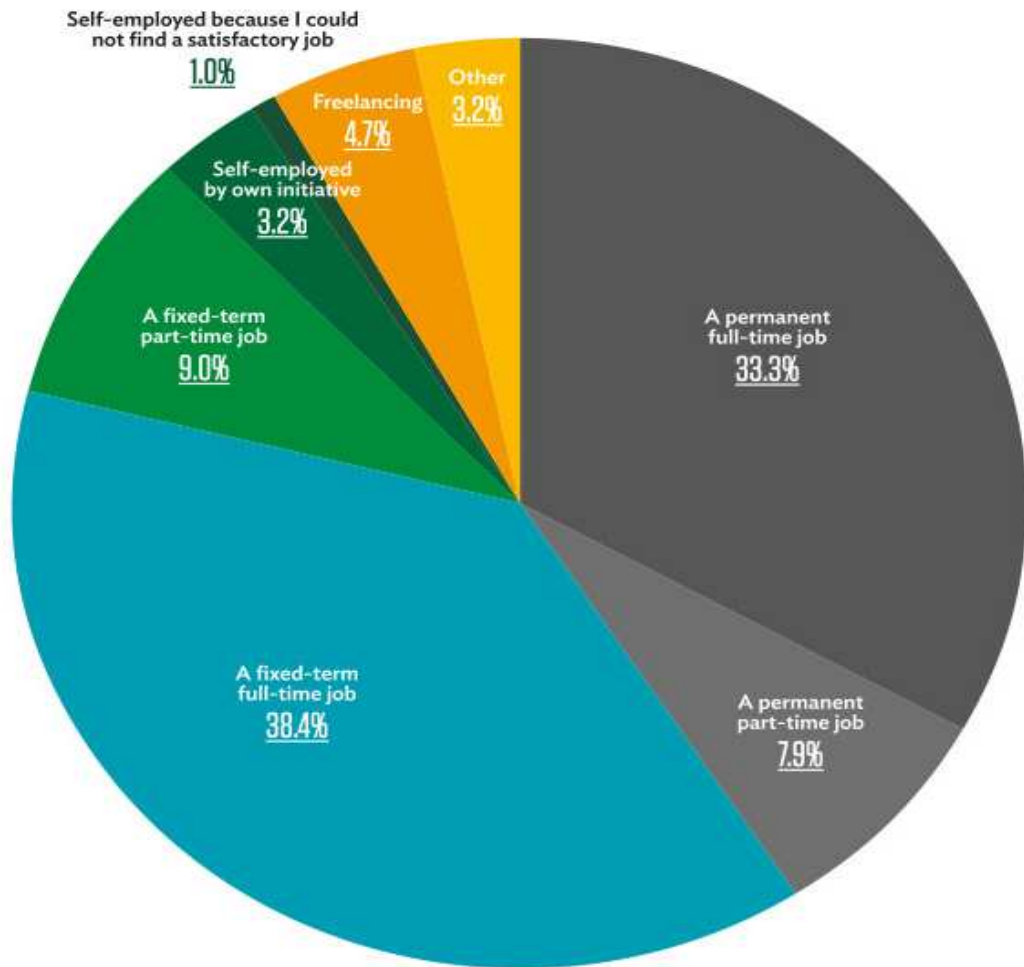


Figure 6. Status of international graduate's first employment in Finland (Shumilova et al. 2012)

In terms of sectors, majority of the international graduates work for private companies (55.9%) while 32.8% work in public organizations, 6.2% choose non-profit organizations and 5.7% belong to other sectors.

According to field, the most popular industries that attract significant international graduations are Business and Sales, Engineering and Computer Sciences, and Academic/Research (figure 7). Tourism and Hospitality Management also belongs to top five with 7.5% of UAS and 1% of University graduates (Shumilova et al. 2012.)

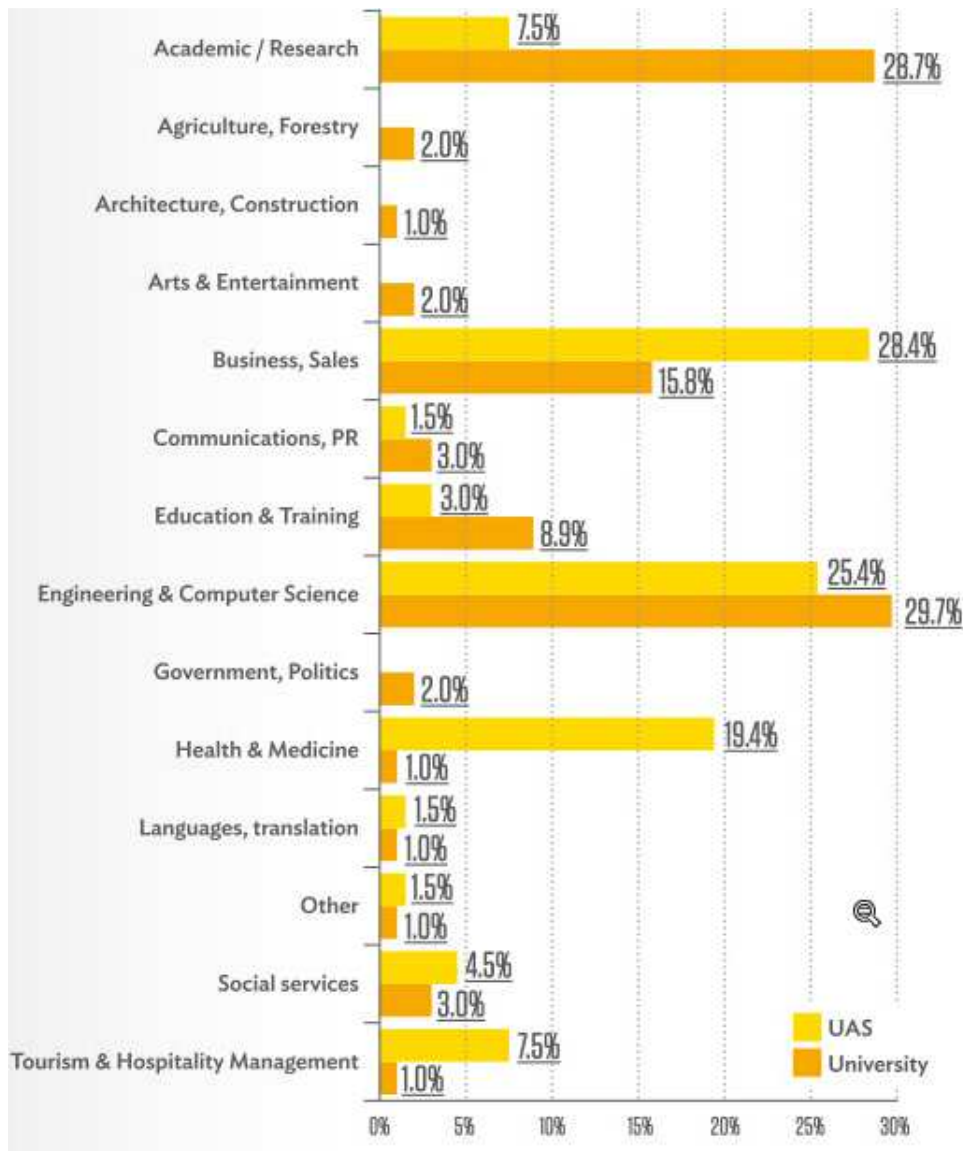


Figure 7. Professional fields of graduates' current jobs (Shumilova 2012)

When asked about the methods of finding jobs in Finland, most of the respondents in this study answered that they got their job by responding to job advertisements (28.4%) or contacting directly to employers with open applications (26.2%). The social network plays an increasing role in finding a job. Personal connections and recommendations from teaching staff sometimes can also help graduated students.

However, even though many employers interviewed show their positive attitude toward hiring and working with international graduates, international graduated students themselves still find some significant barriers in securing their jobs in Finland, which are:

- The lack of adequate language skills, including Finnish and others languages such as Swedish or Russian
- The lack of the right networks
- The lack of work experience, especially through internships
- The small labour market, which might lead to high competition
- Ethnic discrimination in recruitment process, social barriers
- Lack of careers recommendation

Many international graduates taking part in the study claimed that their skills and knowledge are actually higher than what is required in jobs. This phenomenon reflects the situation of underemployment of international students, who have to take on any available job. This may mean that international students sometimes have to lower their job expectations in a foreign labour market due to some reasons, for instance insufficient language skills.

However, even though Finnish language skill is necessary for many occupational prospects as well as “the recruitment of talented youth to the Finnish labour force” has been emphasized as one of the main aspects of the internationalisation policy of higher education, language studies provided in higher education institutes in Finland are still evaluated as under sufficient level. The reason for this might be that the students do not realize themselves the importance of learning Finnish because of the fact: very often, the students do not even know themselves if they will be able to stay in Finland or not. Hence, it is common that they do not start learning the language until by the time they graduate or even after that. In this case, it is recommended that students’ awareness of the importance of Finnish should be raised by university administrators during the orientation weeks. (Shumilova et al. 2012.)

### **3 Research methodology**

In this chapter, the authors are presenting the two main headings related to research methodology, which are (1) research design and (2) research tactics, respectively. In research design, the overall plan of the research which includes research strategies, research method choices, time horizon... are illustrated.

later, in the second part, details about the research with sampling, data collection process and data analysis process are clarified.

### **3.1 Research design**

As presented earlier, in this part, the overall plan of the research is explained clearly in order to provide the readers with the brief idea of the research methodology used in this study.

#### **3.1.1 Purpose of the research**

The first important thing on designing a research is to identify the purpose of it. Based on the purpose, researches can be categorized into three types: exploratory studies, descriptive studies and explanatory studies. As mentioned in the first chapter, the main purpose of this research is “to create a brief picture of international students’ expectation as well as difficulties that they have to face after graduation from Universities of applied sciences’ degree programmes in Tourism and Hospitality when entering Tourism and Hospitality industries”. With this purpose, the research can be considered as both exploratory and descriptive study.

“Exploratory study”, mentioned in the book by Saunders, is the term used for valuable means of finding out “what is happening, seek a new insights; to ask question and access phenomena in a new light”. The use of this type of study is mainly to “clarify your understanding of the problem” (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 139). Based on the aim of “investigating” the expectation holding by international students as well as the obstacles they might face when entering tourism and hospitality industries in Finland after graduating from Universities of applied sciences in these particular degree programmes, “exploratory” is the most suitable term can be used to describe this research.

Besides that, “descriptive study”, with the objective of portraying “an accurate profile of persons, events or situation” (Robson 2002, p.59), was recommended to be used as an “extension of, or forerunner to, a piece of exploratory research” (Saunders et al. 2009, p.140). In this case, in order to provide readers

with a clearer picture on this problem, the authors decided to use descriptive method as an addition to the research.

### **3.1.2 Research strategies**

According to Saunders et al (2009), for different researches, researchers can adopt different research strategies. Each of them can be used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. The accepted strategies mentioned by Saunders include: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. After studying carefully the nature of this research as well as the characteristics of each strategy, the authors agreed on employing the two strategies as the back-bone for this thesis, which are: survey and case study.

Survey is a popular strategy in business and management research, which is commonly used to answer the questions *who, what, how much and how many*. Hence, this strategy is frequently used for exploratory and descriptive research. Furthermore, this strategy allows researchers to collect a large amount of data from a sizable population in an economical way, therefore perfectly suitable for quantitative analysis with descriptive statistic. (Saunders et al. 2009.) Base on this description, it is undoubtable that survey was a great choice for this research, which helped the authors to generate the findings that represented a large amount of international students in Finland.

Case study, on the other hand, is defined as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multi method of evidence” (Saunders et al. 2009). The case study strategy, in other words, will be ideal for anyone who wishes to gain a rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted. It allows the researchers to find the answers for the questions *why* and *how*. For those reasons, in this study, this strategy was adopted by the authors with the purpose of generalize the findings with deeper understanding besides the descriptive statistics. “Multiple cases” choice was applied with 6 cases.

### 3.1.3 Research method choices

In order to choose a reasonable method for this thesis, the authors had studied different research methods and finally decided to use multiple methods to get the best finding for the research.

Before explaining the reason for this decision, the authors would like to clarify the definition as well as the use of two methods used in our research: (1) quantitative and (2) qualitative method. There are fundamental differences in the nature of these two methods. While quantitative focused on numeric and statistic to answer the question *what, where, and how many*, qualitative is non-numerical and used to answer the question *why and how*. Because of the difference in focusing, the methodologies of quantitative and qualitative methods also have some fundamental differences. Quantitative is used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as questionnaire) and data analysis procedure (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or uses the numerical data. On the other hand, qualitative is used to describe any data collection technique (such as interview) and data analysis procedure (such as categorizing data) that generates or uses non-numerical data. (Saunders et al. 2009.)

For different purposes of researching, researchers can choose either using a single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedure (mono method) or combining quantitative and qualitative techniques and analysis procedures to answer the research questions (multiple methods) (Saunders et al. 2009). In this research, the authors chose multiple methods, meaning the data was approached in multiple ways, including both qualitative and quantitative techniques. In addition, both primary and secondary data was considered for the better findings.

The reason of this choice was to provide better answers to the research questions. Firstly, the authors would like to test the existing theory by using questionnaire to collect descriptive data on the international students' expectations and obstacles. Secondly, on the purpose of "developing the theory", especially on the particular case of international students studying hospitality and tourism in Finland, semi-structured interviews were conducted for deeper study.



### 3.1.4 Time horizons

Time horizon is an important term in research design. It answers the question if the researchers want the research to be a “snapshot” taken or more like a “diary” or a series of snapshots that represents events over a given period. The choice of time horizon is mostly identified by the research questions. (Saunders et al. 2009.)

Depending on time horizons, researches are divided into two types: cross-sectional studies (refers to “snapshot” perspective) and longitudinal (refers to “diary” perspective) studies (Saunders et al. 2009). Based on the nature of this research which involves international students graduating from Universities of applied sciences in Hospitality and Tourism degree programmes in Finland at the time of writing, the authors found that cross-sectional study was the most suitable one.

### 3.1.5 The credibility of the research findings

The credibility of the research findings is an essential part of every research. The main idea of this is to avoid getting wrong answers for the research questions, which in the other words means reducing the possibility of getting the answers wrong. In order to apply this, the attention needs to be paid to two particular emphases in research design: reliability and validity. (Saunders et al. 2009.)

Reliability refers to “the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings” (Saunders et al. 2009, p.156). According to Robson (2002), there are four threats that might affect the reliability of a research, which are *subject or participant error*, *subject or participant bias*, *observer error* and *observer bias*. In this study, as mentioned in the section 1.3. *Scopes and limitations*, the authors were strongly aware of some major limitations that could have slight effect on the result of the research. Otherwise, in order to guarantee the reliability for the thesis, notes and materials were made and kept during the research process. This allows the writers to look carefully after the entire process and reanalyse if necessary.

Validity is “concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about” (Saunders et al. 2009, p.157). The validity of researches, according to Robson (2002), might be decreased because of these following elements: *history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation* and *ambiguity about casual direction*. To minimize the potential lack of validity, the authors had studied these questions carefully themselves and asked their friends for advice in refining the questionnaire. The purpose of this action was to ensure that the questions asked were easy to understand and these respondents had no problems answering them. (Saunders et al. 2009.)

### **3.1.6 The ethics of research design**

The ethics of the research design was always considered by the authors during the planning process of this study. The ethical issues here mean that the research design should not subject those researched to “embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantages” (Saunders 2009 et al., p.159). In data collecting process, respondents for survey and interviewees were informed about the authors, contents of the research, and its purposes. Details of the interviews were explained clearly to the interviewees and their permissions for recording were asked. Moreover, name of these respondents and interviewees were kept concealed in order to keep the confidentiality and objectivity of the answers.

## **3.2 Research tactics**

While the previous part draws a brief picture of the research design, this second part of research methodology illustrates the detailed plan of the research.

### **3.2.1 Research samples**

Selecting samples is an inevitable part of any research. It helps researcher in designing the research in the most economical way that saves both time and money by considering only a sizable population. This also reduces the amount of data needed to collect by focusing on a group of people rather than studying the entire population.

## **Population**

The target population in this research was the international students in Finland, who had graduated or were close to graduate from Universities of applied sciences in degree programmes related to tourism and hospitality that had desire of entering tourism and hospitality industries in Finland. As the authors wanted to focus on the international students that came to Finland for higher education only, the students chosen for this research had studied in English degree programmes and had no background study in Finland before.

### **Sample size**

The sample size was discussed carefully by the authors. Due to the limitations in channels, time and money, the authors agreed that the sample size used for the general study with survey were 30 questionnaires. For case study, the amount of 6 interviews was undertaken.

### **Sampling techniques**

In the book “Research for business students”, Saunders mentioned that there were two types of available sampling techniques for researches, which were: *profitability or representative sampling* and *non-profitability or judgemental sampling*. Profitability sampling technique means that the chance of each case selected from the population is known and equal to each other. In contrast, for non-profitability samples, the chance is not known. As the authors have said earlier in this thesis, it was challenging for them in finding the suitable channel to reach the right subjects for the study because of the privacy issues and validity of the information. The only choice for choosing sample in this case was non-profitability sampling.

In non-profit sampling types of technique, Saunders et al (2009) mention different techniques for choosing samples for researches, including: *quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection and convenience*. Each of these techniques has various impacts on the researches and is suitable for different purposes. After studying these techniques, the authors decided that snowball was a good selection for the thesis. Snowball technique, as described, is “common used when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population”. In this case, it was difficult for the authors to define if the students had all the suitable characteris-

tics for the research as *being international students, having graduated/or going to graduate from Universities of applied sciences in degree programmes related to tourism and hospitality in Finland, and especially having desire of staying in Finland and entering tourism and hospitality industries*. Due to that demanding requirement of the research, the authors needed to:

1. Make the contact with their friends who were cases in the population/ or who studied in different universities of applied sciences in Finland in degree programmes related to tourism and hospitality that knew the exact other cases.
2. Ask them to identify the further cases.
3. Ask these new cases to identify the further new cases (and so on.)

When the amount of the cases reached the amount of thirty (30) cases, this process was stopped. The authors contacted these identified cases themselves or with the help of their friends and asked them to fill in the questionnaire and attend the interviews.

Even though this technique was criticized as having low degree of being representative, it was a useful technique for this difficult case of identifying the suitable samples for researching.

Besides that, self-selection sampling was applied as well. This technique occurs when the researchers allow each case, usually individual, “to identify their desire to take part in the research” (Saunders et al. 2009). In this data collecting process, firstly, the writers created their questionnaire form on Internet, through Google docs. After that, they published the questionnaire on Facebook page and through emails, asking their friends to spread them to the suitable respondents and tried to get volunteers fill then in.

### **3.2.2 Data collecting process**

In the section 4.1.3 *Research method choices*, the authors had stated that in this thesis, data would be collected with multiple method choices. In the other words, the authors had used primary data collected by both quantitative method and qualitative one.

Firstly, during studying the literature framework of this thesis and getting to understand the cases of researching, the authors had read different books, articles, reports, Statistic Finland publications, webpages, etc. These data provided them with the basic knowledge of the issue and gave them the idea of creating more focused research questions and developing more suitable research design.

Secondly, in the later part of the study, data were collected in order to answer the main research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. Quantitative data were collected through survey (questionnaire) while qualitative data were acquired through interviews.

### **Quantitative data collecting process**

Quantitative data were collected through online survey.

After questionnaire was conducted in Word form and agreed by both of the authors, it was created in Google docs as a survey form. The survey included two parts. The first part focused on the background of the respondent about gender, age, nationality and study background, etc. The second part was the main part of the research. Questions related to descriptive expectations and obstacles were mentioned in Likert scale form. The variables were measured using the five point from 1 to 5 one showing disagree and 5 strong agreement.

As mentioned in the previous section, the samples were selected with snowball technique and the authors knew by far some exact cases for the research. The hyperlink of the questionnaire was published on Facebook pages of both authors and was sent to their friends – who were the suitable cases or who knew the suitable cases through emails and Facebook messenger. These friends were asked to answer the questionnaire and help to spread it to the other potential respondents.

### **Qualitative data collecting process**

Qualitative data were collected through interviews. These interviews were conducted for the purpose of getting deeper understanding about different cases and developing the theory if possible.

Because of the lack of time and money, this process was a big challenge for the authors of this research. Effort was made in contacting all the potential interviewees, who were mostly friends of the writers. In order to ensure the diversity and objectivity of the study, they tried to choose the interviewees from different countries, graduating from different universities with different degree programme titles in all parts of Finland.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted during March 2014. Some of the interviews were face-to-face while the others were through Skype or phone. All of the interviewees were asked for permission of recording. Each discussion lasted from 30 minutes to one hour and details of the interviews including date, time, places, answers, etc. were written down.

The content of each interview also consisted of two parts like in the questionnaire with the first part about personal background of interviewee and the second one focusing on the research questions. Besides the descriptive expectations and obstacles, the authors and the interviewees also discussed the interviewee's own experiences and stories. Finally, questions about recommendations for other students to overcome the barriers as well as for universities of applied sciences and other organization in supporting international students were mentioned.

### **3.2.3 Data analysis process**

If the previous section focuses on the data collecting process, this section describes data analysis process in detail with methods and tools used to analyse the data acquired through survey (quantitative method) and interviews (qualitative method).

#### **Quantitative data analysis process**

The raw material (raw data) collected through Google Docs survey, were processed using IBM SPSS (Statistic Product and Service Solutions) Statistics software.

After studying some other similar theses with small sample size (about 30-50 respondents), the authors had agreed that only a simple statistic which included

simple descriptive statistic describing the most popular expectations and obstacles faced by international students in Finland in entering tourism and hospitality industries after graduation would be applied. As the statistic was already created in a simple form, there was no strong need for further statistic tests to ensure the normality, validity and reliability of the data.

### **Qualitative data analysis process**

Qualitative data, as discussed earlier, at the beginning of the stage was collected by interviews and was audio-recorded. After that, these interviews were reproduced exactly in written form.

The next step was 'organizing data', in which the authors had studied carefully the interviews transcripts and condensed the data collected by leaving out information that is not relevant to the purpose of the thesis. This action made the research data become more manageable.

The third step in the process was 'categorizing data'. In this step, research data were categorized into predefined theme based on the literature review.

Fourthly, research data after categorization was 'unitized' (or 'coded'), meaning the relevant chunks of data including words, phrases, sentences, etc. were reduced into units (by the same code) in the categories. This action helped avoid 'overlapping data' because of repetition.

The final phase of the process is 'interpreting data'. At this stage, raw data were interpreted and be brought to the readers through written report. Conclusion was finally drawn based on literature review and the research findings.

## 4 Research Result

In this section, the research results, including quantitative result and qualitative result, are revealed.

### 4.1 Quantitative result

Quantitative result, as mentioned in section 4.5.3. *Data analysis process*, was conducted with the help of IBM SPSS Statistic software. The questionnaire consists of two parts: *background and characteristics of the respondents* with 14 questions and *descriptive expectations and obstacles* with Likert form.

#### 4.1.1 Characteristic of respondents

The first part of the survey was used to describe the respondents with 14 questions, which were divided into two smaller parts.

The first one focused on the respondents' basic background information with questions about gender, age, country of citizenship, time of living in Finland, universities of studying, name of degree, year of graduation. Several graphs were utilized to present data due to the help of SPSS Statistics software.

There were 30 respondents participating in the survey in total, 19 (63.3%) out of which were females and 11 (36.7%) were males. All respondents of the survey were not older than 30 years old. Majority of them were 25 years old and younger (25 respondents) and only 5 students (20%) were above that age.

When asked about country of citizenship, the two most frequent countries were mentioned were Vietnam with 11 respondents (36.7%) and Russia with 10 respondents (33.3%). The following one was Nepal with 4 respondents (13.3%). The rest of the respondents were from Turkey, Germany, France, Bangladesh and Poland. (See Table 1 below.)



### Country of citizenship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Russia	10	33,3	33,3	33,3
Vietnam	11	36,7	36,7	70,0
Valid Nepal	4	13,3	13,3	83,3
Others	5	16,7	16,7	100,0
Total	30	100,0	100,0	

Table 1. Country of citizenship

Since the subject of the research was international students who had already graduated or close to graduation from universities of applied sciences in Finland who did not have any other lower education background in Finland, it is understandable that most of the respondents have the time staying in Finland ranging from 3 to less than 7 years. Three quarters of the students had been in Finland for around 3 or 4 years while 6 respondents (20%) said that their time of staying in Finland was 5 years and only 1 answers was 6 years (3.3%). (See Chart 1 below.)

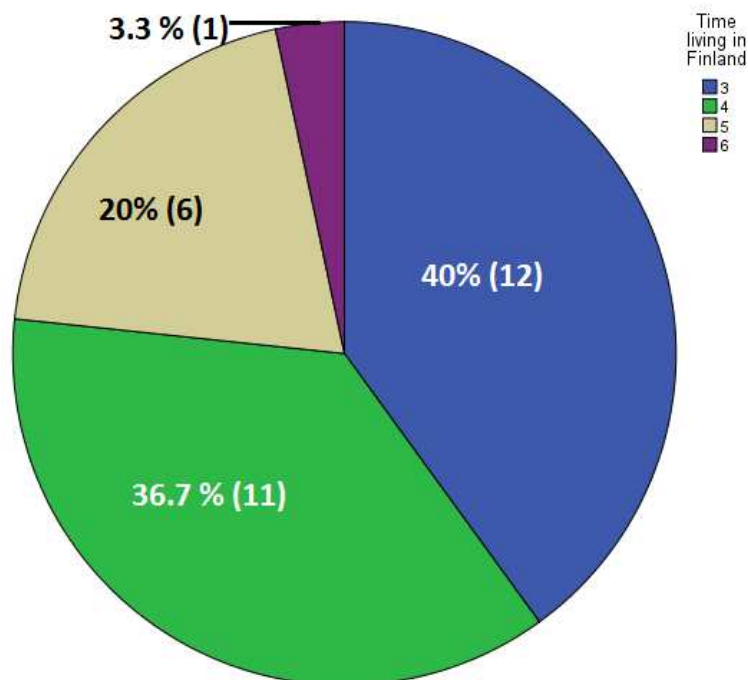


Chart 1. Time of living in Finland

As discussed in the section 1.3. *Scope and limitations*, due to the lack of channel in reaching respondents, most of the students participated in the survey were friends or friends of friends of the authors, which led to the fact that majority of the respondents were students of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (63.3%). The second most frequent answer was Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences with 5 students (16.7%), following by Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences with 3 students (10%), Rovaniemi University with 2 students (6.7%) and the last one was Vaasa University of Applied Sciences with 1 student (3.3%). (See Table 2 below)

**Name of UAS**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Saimaa UAS	19	63,3	63,3	63,3
Rovaniemi UAS	2	6,7	6,7	70,0
Haaga Helia	3	10,0	10,0	80,0
JAMK UAS	5	16,7	16,7	96,7
Vaasa UAS	1	3,3	3,3	100,0
Total	30	100,0	100,0	

Table 2. Name of UAS

In the terms of degree programmes, it was shown that among 30 respondents, 13 students had their degree programme in Tourism management (43.3%) whereas 11 students were from degree programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management (36.7%) and the rest were Facility management degree programme students (20%). (See Table 3 below.)

### Name of degree

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hotel, restaurant and tourism management	11	36,7	36,7	36,7
Valid Tourism management	13	43,3	43,3	80,0
Facility management	6	20,0	20,0	100,0
Total	30	100,0	100,0	

Table 3. Name of degree

Asked about year of graduation, reasonably, as most of the students had their time of living in Finland were around 3 and 4 years, 20 out of 30 respondents' answered that their estimated years of graduation were 2014 and 2015. Other 7 students stated that they had graduated in 2013 while 2 had graduated in 2012 and only 1 answered that his graduation year was 2011. (See Chart 2 below.)

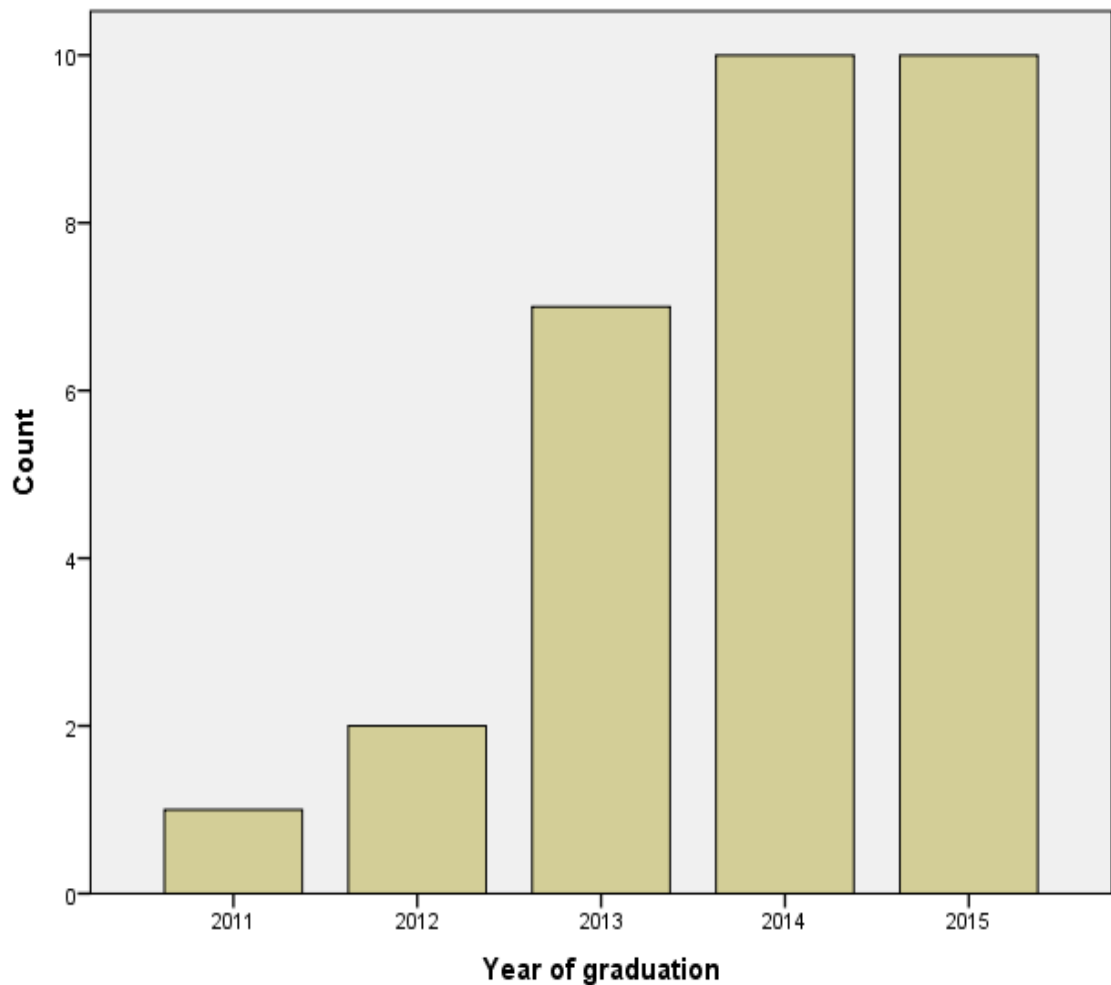


Chart 2. Year of graduation

The following answers were created for the purpose of getting deeper understanding about the respondents with information about their reasons of staying in Finland as well as their skills and experiences, current employment situations and expectations about employment positions after graduation. In this part, some data collected through survey was organized, categorized in groups and coded in order to create descriptive statistics with SPSS Statistics software.

The first information that the authors wanted to explore about the respondents was their reasons for staying in Finland after graduation. The respondents were asked to mention at most 3 main reasons for their preferences of staying and working in Finland after graduation. Among 30 respondents, 24 students (80%) claimed that one of the first reasons was because of 'good life standard' in the country. The following reasons stated were 'high salaries' with 13 answers (43.3%) and better opportunities for jobs with 11 responses (36.7%). Safety was

the next popular one with 9 responses (30 %). The geographic reasons were also mentioned by Russian respondents (4.7%). The others answers received were 'relatives' (2 responses) and 'good education systems in Finland' (2 responses). (See Table 4 below.)

#### Reason of staying in Finland

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Reasons to stay in Finland	Good life standard	24	37,5%	80,0%
	High salaries	13	20,3%	43,3%
	Better opportunities for jobs	11	17,2%	36,7%
	Safety	9	14,1%	30,0%
	Closeness to Russia	3	4,7%	10,0%
	Others	4	6,3%	13,3%
	Total	64	100,0%	213,3%

Table 4. Reasons for staying in Finland

Language skills of the respondents were the next concern of the researchers. According to TNS Opinion and Socials in report of "Europeans and their languages" (2012), besides the official languages of Finnish and Swedish, Russian was the third most spoken native in Finland. The two other main foreign languages used were English (70%) and German (18%). Due to the applicability of the languages in Finland, the language skills that the authors would like to take into consideration in this research were only these mentioned ones.

It was reasonable that English was spoken by all respondents as all the degree programmes were taught in English. Majority of the students (22 students - 73.3%) believed that their English skills were at 'excellent' level while there were 8 respondents (26.7%) who thought that their English skills were 'good'. Finnish skills were mentioned as 'basic' in 22 cases (73.3%), 'sufficient' in 4 cases (13.3%), 'good' in 2 cases (6.7%) and 'excellent' in the last 2 cases (6.7%). Understandably, Russian was shown as the native language of three thirds of the respondents (33.3%). Besides that, 18 other students (60%) stated

that they did not speak this language at all while the 2 remaining cases answered that their Russian skills was at 'good' and 'sufficient' levels. German was exceptionally spoken by one student (3.3%) as his native language whereas German skills of 60% of the respondents (18 cases) were 'none', 26.7% (8 cases) were basic, 6.7% (2 cases) were good and 3.3% (1 case) were sufficient. Lastly, it is surprisingly that Swedish was answered spoken by none of the respondents. (See Chart 3 below.)

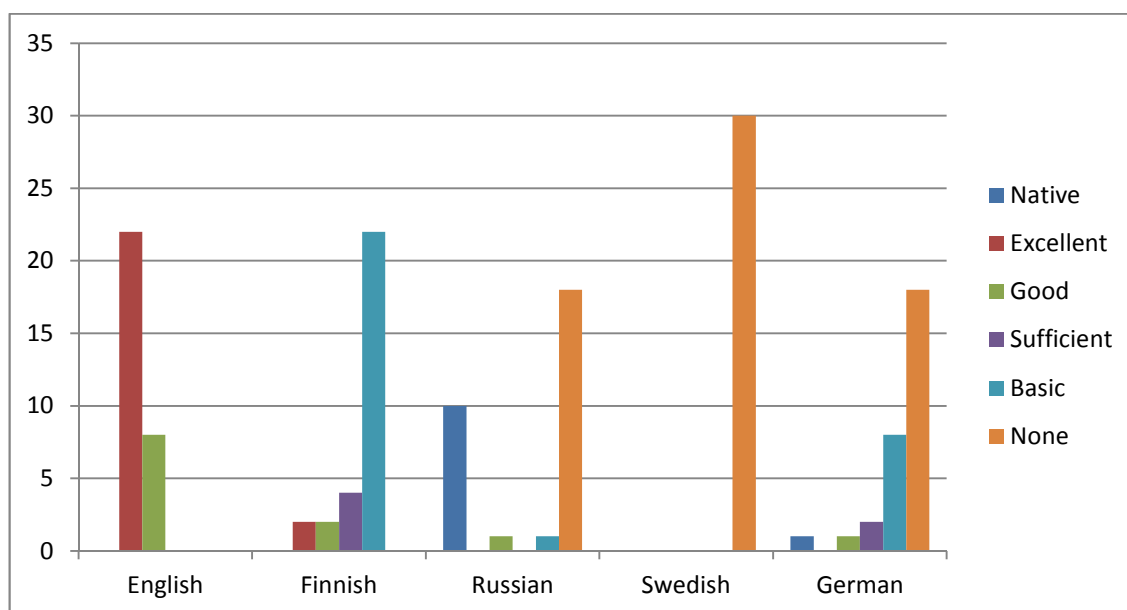


Chart 3. Languages skills of the respondents

About previous work experiences, in the limitation of this research, the authors only focused on work experiences related to the fields of tourism and hospitality. Hence, according to the characteristics of the work experiences given by the respondents, the answers were categorized in three groups: *tourism and hospitality related experiences*, *other fields related experiences* and *none previous experiences*. It was shown that there were only 2 cases out of 30 respondents (6.7%) who had no previous experiences at all while 23 students had experiences in Tourism and Hospitality fields (76.7%). Among these 23 students, 6 ones stated that they also had experiences in other field jobs, which together with 5 cases (16.7%) that only had work experiences related to other fields led to the total amount of 11 cases (36.7%) with other field related experiences.

### Work experiences of respondents

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Work experiences	None	2	5,6%	6,7%
	Tourism and hospitality related	23	63,9%	76,7%
	Other fields related	11	30,6%	36,7%
Total		36	100,0%	120,0%

Table 5. Work experiences of respondents

Asked about current employment situations, 11 respondents (36.7%) said that they were unemployment, of which only 1 person had already graduated. The most popular jobs of the respondents were 'waiter' with 4 people (13.3%), 'cashier' and 'cleaner', both with 3 people (10%). Details about current jobs of respondents are shown in the table 6 below.

### Current jobs of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	*None	11	36,7	36,7	36,7
	Atache assistant	1	3,3	3,3	40,0
	Cashier	3	10,0	10,0	50,0
	Chef de Patissier	1	3,3	3,3	53,3
	Cleaner	3	10,0	10,0	63,3
	Marketing secreatary	1	3,3	3,3	66,7
	Marketing specialist	2	6,7	6,7	73,3
	Postman	2	6,7	6,7	80,0
	Receptionist	1	3,3	3,3	83,3
	Sales manager	1	3,3	3,3	86,7
	Waiter	4	13,3	13,3	100,0
	Total	30	100,0	100,0	

Table 6. Current jobs of the respondents

Among 19 students getting employed, only 8 people (42%) said that they thought their current jobs were close to the types of jobs that they expected to get after graduation.

The last question of this part was if the respondents find finding jobs in Finland difficult or not. More than half of the students (53.3%) said that finding jobs in Finland was at 'normal' level, 9 students (30%) thought that it was difficult, 3 students (10%) said it was very difficult while the other 2 (6.7%) claimed that it was easy for them. (See Chart 4 below.)

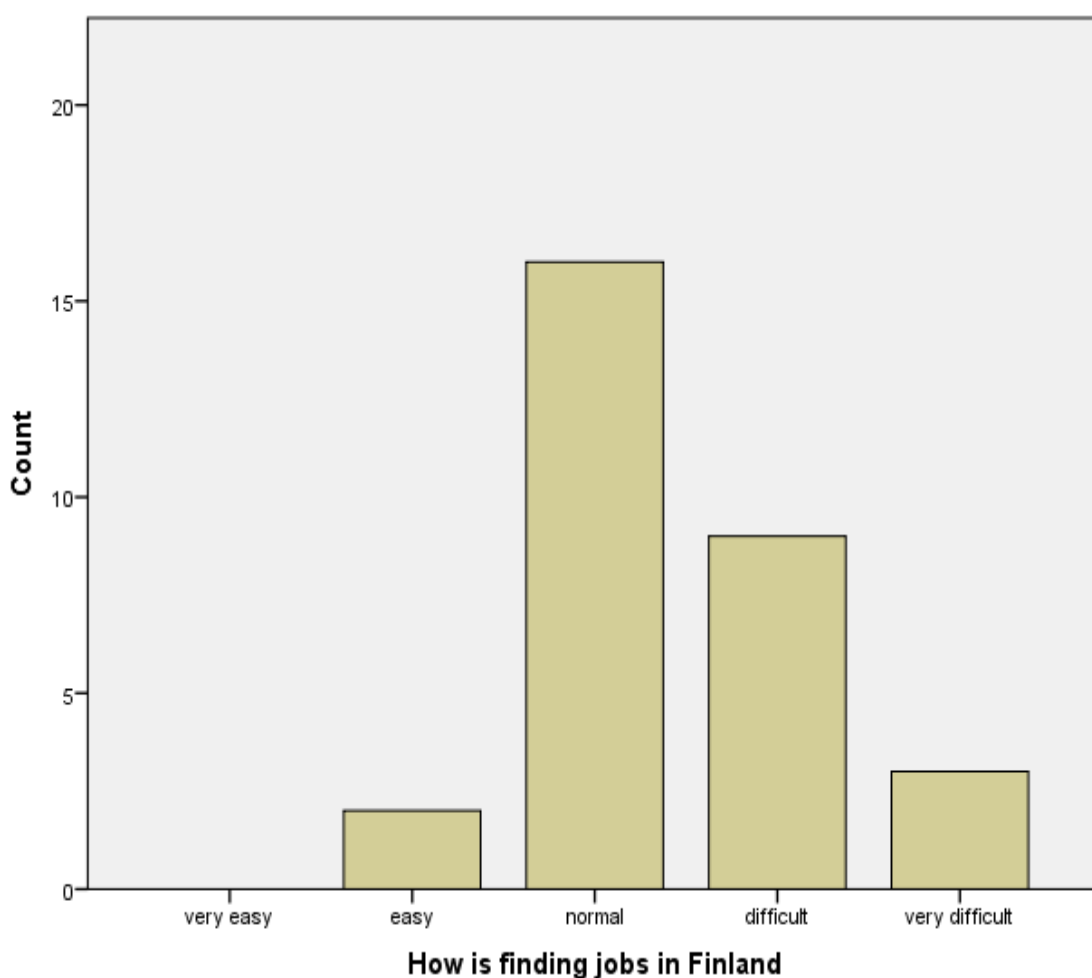


Chart 4. How is finding jobs in Finland

#### 4.1.2 Descriptive statistics of expectations and obstacles

In the second part of the survey, two Likert scales for the purpose of exploring the descriptive expectations and obstacles of international students having



graduated from universities of applied sciences in Finland degree programmes in tourism and hospitality in entering Finnish tourism and hospitality industries.

### **Descriptive statistics of expectations**

Studying about ‘expectations holding by international students studying countries abroad about employment after graduation’, the authors noticed that the most concerned issues that were mentioned in majority of the materials found were wages and the job’s probability including job opportunities and the suitability of jobs, which were mostly different from domestic students. The Likert scales used in this part to investigate the expectations of international students in universities of applied sciences in Finland degree programmes in tourism and hospitality when entering tourism and hospitality industries in Finland after graduation was created based on the study of Dyck (2011) about ‘students’ wage and employment expectations’ carried on in a group of students in Thompson River University in Canada, that was mentioned in the section 2.5 *International students’ employment expectations*. Besides that, some of the statements were changed or added in order to meet with the situation of Finland and its labour market.

The Likert scales includes 6 statements representing the descriptive expectations of international students about their employment after graduation, which was evaluated by the respondents based on the scale from 1 to 5 with 1 equalled to strongly disagree and 5 equalled to strongly agree according to their perspectives. It is noted that by ‘higher salary’, ‘less competition’ and ‘better opportunities’, the authors meant ‘in comparison with the ones in the respondents’ countries of citizenship”. The table 7 below illustrates the statistics.

### Descriptive Statistics of International student's Expectations

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Easy time finding jobs	30	3,20	1,186
Higher salaries	30	3,97	,928
Work in your own field	30	3,83	1,085
Better opportunities	30	3,83	,986
Good position	30	3,50	1,167
Less competition	30	2,77	1,040
Work in multinational company	30	3,87	,900
Valid N (listwise)	30		

Table 7. Descriptive Statistic of International student's expectations

Noticeably, the statements: 'higher salary', 'work in multinational company', 'better opportunities' and 'work in your own field' had the highest means of 3.97, 3.87, 3.83 and 3.83 respectively. This record demonstrates that majority of the students participating in the survey expect that they would have higher salaries, better opportunities and work in their own field as well as multinational environment when entering Finnish labour market in tourism and hospitality.

In contrast, the statement 'less competition' was the one with the lowest mean (2.77), which shows that not so many students think that they could get 'less competition' in Finland when getting employed after graduation. Being more specific, only 30% of the respondents (9 people) said that they agreed with this statement while other 30% had the neutral idea and the rest (40%) stated that they disagreed or even strongly disagreed. (See Table 8 below.)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	4	13,3	13,3	13,3
2	8	26,7	26,7	40,0
Valid 3	9	30,0	30,0	70,0
4	9	30,0	30,0	100,0
Total	30	100,0	100,0	

Table 8. Evaluations toward the statement 'less competition'.

The other two statements of 'easy time finding jobs' (3.20) and 'good position' (3.50) received quite neutral responses.

### **Descriptive statistics of obstacles**

The second research question to be answered in this study is the obstacles faced by international students after graduation from universities of applied sciences degree programmes in tourism and hospitality when entering these particular industries in Finland. As mentioned above, another Likert scale was used in order to investigate the perspectives of the respondents about different obstacles. The Likert scale in this part was built based on the materials mentioned in section 2.6 *International student's expectations* and 3.3 *International students in Finland*, including "International students" by The University of Sydney (2013), "Career and Job Hunting Tips and Advice" by iStudent City (2009), "SER Knowledge Café with International Students" by SER (2013) and "Employability of International Graduates educated in Finnish higher education institutions" by Shumilova et. al (2012). Besides that, some of the statements were changed and added in order to meet the situation in Finland.

The Table 9 below presented the descriptive statistics obtained from the survey.

### Descriptive Statistics of International student's Obstacles

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of Finnish skills	30	3,80	1,472
Lack of other languages skills	30	3,00	1,287
Lack of experiences	30	2,93	1,081
Lack of education	30	2,43	1,073
Lack of culture-know-how	30	2,90	,885
Lack of recommendation	30	2,90	1,094
Lack of trust toward foreigners	30	2,77	1,251
Lack of government's support	30	2,83	1,206
Low salary	30	2,40	1,192
High competition	30	3,37	,850
Too challenging tasks	30	2,70	1,119
Too much responsibility	30	2,57	1,006
Bad work conditions	30	2,23	1,165
Difficulties in working documents	30	2,97	1,033
Racism	30	2,60	1,003
Valid N (listwise)	30		

Table 9. Descriptive statistic of international student's obstacles

Overall, it is shown in the table that most of the statements have the means of lower than the average (3), which illustrates that the majority of the international students do not consider these obstacles mentioned as big barriers in entering Finnish labour market in tourism and hospitality industries after graduation.

Above all, 'lack of Finnish skills' with the means of 3.80 appears as the most critical obstacle to international students when getting employed in Finland

while with 3.00, 'lack of other languages skills' seems to be not a significant problem to some of the respondents, especially Russian students (Chart 5).

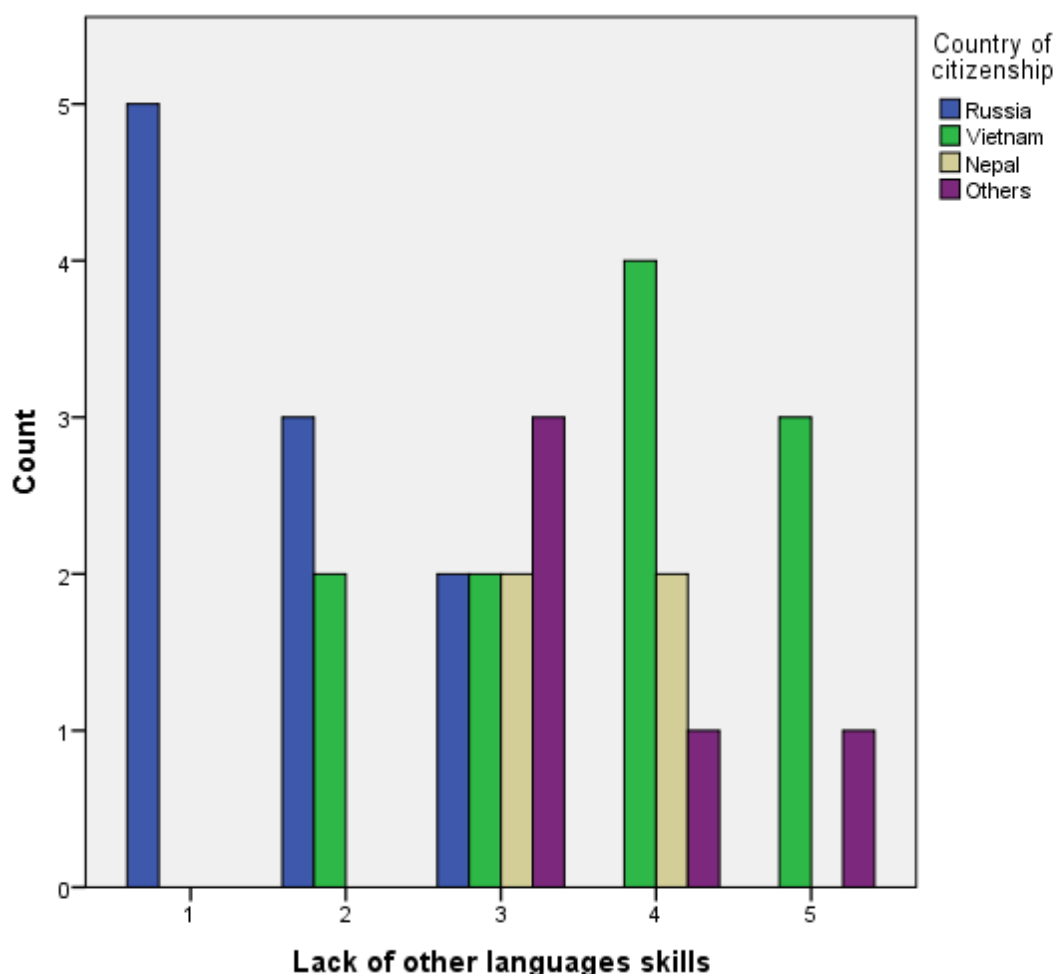


Chart 5: Evaluation toward statement 'lack of language skills' by nationalities.

With the second highest mean of 3.37, 'high competition' again shows that competition is evaluated as a challenge in entering tourism and hospitality industries in Finland after graduation. The following difficulties recorded by means were orderly 'difficulties in working documents' (2.97), 'lack of experiences' (2.93), 'lack of culture know-how' (2.90) and 'lack of recommendation' (2.90). The statements: 'bad working condition' (2.23), 'low salary' (2.40) and 'lack of education' (2.43) with the lowest means demonstrated that in this case, majority of international students in Finland do not regard these problem as their difficulties.

It is noted that even though questions about parents' highest education and occupancy were asked in order to explore the connection between parents' quality

and students expectations, the data collected through survey showed that there were no references between these two elements. Overall, the research result shows that there were not many big differences between the expectations and obstacles of international students who had graduated from universities of applied sciences degree programmes in tourism and hospitality in Finland when entering these particular industries and the other groups of students in previous studies mentioned in the theories.

## **4.2 Qualitative result**

In this section, the qualitative research result is revealed. Based on the purposes of the study, the qualitative research was applied in order to firstly capture the real life characteristic of the international students and their personal perspectives about employment after graduation in Finland: expectations and obstacles. The second purpose of this research is to find the answers for the third research question mentioned in the section *1.2 Objectives and main question*: “How these students can overcome these obstacles and how Universities of applied sciences and other organizations can support them?”

There were 4 interviews obtained in semi-structured form in March and April 2014 in Imatra, Finland.

### **4.2.1 Characteristic of the interviewees**

At the beginning of the interviews, some questions about backgrounds and skills of interviewees were asked for the purpose of drawing brief pictures about profiles of the international students in Finland as well as their characteristics.

Overall, there were 6 interviews were conducted; four of them were face-to-face interviews and two were through Skype. Among these interviewees, only one was male and the others were females. The ages of the interviewees were varied from 21 to 26. About nationalities of the interviewees, two were Russians, two were Nepalese and two were Vietnamese.

Educationally, four out of six interviewees were students of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, degree programme in Tourism Management and the other two were from Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, degree programme in

Facility Management. The time of staying in Finland ranged from 3 to 6 years, corresponding with the year of graduation variation of between 2012 and 2015 (majority of these students (4) have year of graduation of 2014).

Asked about previous work experiences, all the students interviewed mentioned that they had done their placements related to tourism and hospitality industries as a part of their education. Three of them said that besides these internships, they had worked in restaurants and hotels both in their home countries before coming to Finland and in Finland during studying as part time workers. Exceptionally, one interviewee mentioned that he also had work experiences in as a lab technician for three years before changing his education to tourism and hospitality.

About languages skills of the interviewees, all of them evaluated their English skills as 'fluent' as they studied in English. Two students stated that their mother tongue was Russian. Finnish skills of most of the students were 'basic' and two said that they can speak Finnish on medium level. Besides that, these students mentioned that they could also speak some other languages for example German and Spanish at beginning level; one even answered that she could speak Chinese fluently.

### **International students' overall perspective about Finland**

In the next question, the students were asked to describe shortly Finland as work place. 100% of the responses were positive, all of the students claimed that from their point of view Finland was a great place to live and work. It was described as:

- *"a safe workplace, you know that you can't get fired from the work place that easily."*
- *"a safe place to work" where "all the rules are followed", "the rights of the employees were not broken." and "Employees receive a lot of support from company[...]"*
- *"a quite friendly country to work in" as "The places I've been working in it was really friendly environment. Though I was foreigner, no one treated*

*me any differently. People were trying to help if I didn't understand something [...]"*

- *"a very nice country to work, since I'm from such country that there is more hierarchism and in Finland I find it very much less."*
- *"good, nice, (with) good payment, friendly atmosphere"*
- *"fair-play, professional, modern, direct"*

Discussed about the reasons for staying in Finland after graduation, the answers of the students were quite different. The most popular reasons recorded were that they could have higher salary and working condition in Finland, one interviewee mentioned:

*"It's not up to my level but if I go back home, I won't be able to get this much money. That's why I want to live in Finland."*

This also particularly showed how the expectation of the respondent toward salary level in Finland. All the respondents when asked mentioned that they believe they could get **better salary** in Finland in comparison with the level in their country.

**Safety** and **good life standard** were also agreed by the interviewees as good reasons for living in Finland. Personally, two out of six people said that they wanted to stay after graduation because of their relationships, and one added that she would like to continue with her master's degree one in Finnish higher education institution. One Russian interviewee also mentioned that it was good to stay in Finland as the country was really close to her home country geographically.

#### **4.2.2 Expectations and obstacles**

The next part of the interviews included questions about expectations and obstacles of these international students when getting employed in Finland in tourism and hospitality industries. As all the interviewees were also taken from the respondents of the survey, authors believed that it was no use to again explore the perspectives of the interviewees about every single factor mentioned in the



survey. Hence, only open questions were asked and interviewees were encouraged to express their own ideas.

## **Expectations**

Being asked about employment expectations after graduation, all the interviewees claimed that they expected to work in tourism and hospitality industries with jobs related to their education. Some would like to work in tourism field and the other wanted to join hospitality one. Even though all the students who have graduated answered that they got jobs at the point of interviewing, only one said that it met her expectation of job after graduation and she was happy with the current position as a hotel receptionist. Other students were working in house-keeping in hotels or as a paperboy and all of them said that they only wanted to keep this job for a short term of time.

Mentioned about expectation about the **difficulty in finding jobs** after graduation, one student said:

*“I knew it’s not going to be easy to find a job after graduation, because you need to speak Finnish quite well to get a good job.”*

This perspective was shared among most of the other interviewees. One student told that before graduation, he had been thinking that he would get a job in tourism industry or at least in a hotel or restaurant but the real situation was not like what he had expected. After three month of graduation, he still had not got a suitable job. Another student added:

*“...the moment when I graduated, I actually had a job and I was hoping that I would continue, but the situation got changed and I lost my job. I didn’t know what to do after that, so I didn’t have any expectations, I just needed to get a job to stay in Finland.”*

As mentioned above, **salary expectations** of all the interviewees were quite positively. About **job position** expectation, majority of the students agreed that they did not expect high position after graduation; they stated that they did not have any problem working at the start positions as receptionists, waiters, or tour guide. *“I just need to start somewhere”, “I just need to get a job to stay in Fin-*

*land [...]. Any job will be nice” and “I would like to work at any position” were what they said.*

Moreover, one student added “[...] *maybe one negative point is that it is hard to get any kind of promotion if you’re a foreigner*”. Sharing her personal experiences, the student continued:

*“I mean: I have some of my friends who have lived here for ten years. They speak Finnish and they have Finnish citizenship, but because they have Russian surname, it’s hard like from point of view of employers to move, to get promoted. It is hard to get managerial position but it also depends on companies.”*

Mentioned about **competition** in her answer, one Russian respondent shared :  
*“I was thinking that I would get a place at the reception in a hotel, in the area near the Russian border because you need to speak quite good Russian to get a place, which helps me get less competition.”*

Other students did not have any specific expectation about this issue.

**Working in multinational environment** was also not considered as primary expectation of the students participating in the interviews, only one Vietnamese student mentioned:

*“I hope [...], to be able to work with experienced international colleagues and in a friendly but still competitive environment.”*

## **Obstacles**

During the later time of the interviews, the interviewers and the students were discussing the obstacles that the students faced when entering tourism and hospitality industry in Finland.

When asked to list some obstacles that they thought were the most critical barriers for them, all six students mentioned about their lack of Finnish language skills.

*“Even though you speak English and Russian or whatever language, you need to speak Finnish anyway because you’re dealing with Finnish customers, you*

*live in their country. Your colleagues are also mostly Finnish. With young people it is easy to communicate in English language but if it's a bit older generation, they don't speak good English."* – One student explained.

Four other students also thought that Finnish language was their biggest problem. Most of the employers during job interviews had asked about their Finnish level and expected that the students should have spoken better Finnish when applying for the jobs. One interviewee mentioned that he even had visited a job agency for help in job searching and received the response that everything was nice except for his Finnish level.

However, exceptionally, one student expressed that she was disagreed with the idea that the most challenging problem of international students in Finland was the lack of Finnish language. She explained:

*"I heard from consultant that the reason why it is very difficult for foreigners to get a job in Finland is not because of language skills, but because they are not the citizens of that country."*

*"The Finnish person will be hired, because if he's not hired, the Finnish society will have to pay 'unemployment money' and if they don't hire us, the state doesn't have to pay anything. That's why they prefer their own citizens."* – She emphasized.

Another was also agreed that **society** was a great obstacle. According to her, even though it is depending on the company, some Finnish employers, especially older ones were not really willing to hire foreigners; they would prefer working with Finnish employees.

**Lacking information about jobs** and **lack of working experiences** besides internships were also mentioned by couple of students as their main obstacle.

As most of the students agreed that the most considered barrier avoiding them from getting the jobs in Finland was their shortages of Finnish skills, the only solution for the problem was improving their language skills. Besides that, some students mentioned that they had looked for some kinds of job that did not require Finnish despite the fact that the jobs did not meet their expectations. In

one exceptional case, the student who was working as a hotel receptionist shared:

*“I was just a little bit lucky because the hotel needed a Russian speaking person. I had to move from an area to another area, where Russian language is required.”*

When discussing how the universities of applied sciences had helped them to overcome the barriers, most of the students mentioned that the universities of applied sciences where they studied had also noticed the obstacle of Finnish language shortage and tried to offer the students with basic courses of Finnish that could have them obtain the beginning level of the language. In addition, internships as part of the education also provided the students with working experiences in tourism and hospitality fields as well. Otherwise, there were not many things that the universities had offered to help students with other kinds of obstacles, for example “lacking of information”.

#### **4.2.3 Recommendation for universities of applied sciences**

In the last part of the interviews, the students were asked if they thought their studies in universities of applied sciences in Finland were useful for their careers and how they could suggest these institutions improvements in supporting their international students in degree programmes in tourism and hospitality that wanted to stay in Finland after graduation.

Overall, all six students interviewed stated that the studies in universities of applied sciences were helpful for them.

*“Well, I think so because when I came I didn’t know anything about this industry. I think the most useful for me was Intercultural Management course [...]. During my work years I realised that those things were true in real life. And of course language courses were important as well. During my placements, those courses I had in accounting were useful. Finally when I had my professional placement, I was dealing with marketing mostly, so some things from marketing courses I got a chance to apply in real life.”* – One student shared.

On the other hands, students also mentioned that the knowledge provided during their study under universities of applied sciences, however, was partially inadequate. Majority of them were at the very basic level and experiences from work experiences still played a bigger role in fulfilling the understandings and skills of these students. Exceptionally, one student showed her regret of not choosing a normal university instead as according to her, degrees of universities of applied sciences were not really highly valued by employers.

When asked about their recommendation for universities of applied sciences to improve in order to be more supportive to international students in tourism and hospitality degree programmes, the students were really excited. It was interesting that all the students suggested that universities of applied sciences should have cooperation with some companies or organizations that were willing to offer starting positions for international students.

*“It would be really nice if the companies could come to the university to look for certain workers or skills and knowledge, because we are all not the same, we have different good sides.”*

*“[...] maybe try to find some companies that are willing to take students after they’ve graduated not for full time but to give them a chance to show what they can do...”*

*“[...] more connections between organisations and students during study, more chances for practical training and from there lead to job offers.”*

Besides that, specific organizations for instance “career centre” formed by the institutions were recommended by two students. They mentioned that these organizations could be run by alumni or the people who had knowledge and understandings and were willing to provide advice to the students as well as support them in finding jobs and preparing themselves for career lives.

*“Maybe they can have a separate organisation for international students and they can deal with their job problems maybe according to their education and language skills.”*

The other popular suggestion was improvement in language courses and some other practical programmes. Some students believed that the Finnish language and some other languages courses should be improved to be more practical. More practical training was also a good idea.

## **5 Conclusion and Recommendation**

In conclusion, first of all, the authors want to emphasize that the results obtained from qualitative research are mostly consistent with the results given by quantitative one. The figures were reliable and the findings can be considered as general in the population. Overall, there are five key findings drawn from the study:

Firstly, majority of the international students in universities of applied sciences in Finland in degree programmes in tourism and hospitality are from countries outside of Europe, especially Russian and Asian countries. These international students have good English languages level and are provided basic knowledge of Finnish and basic working skills through placements in all universities of applied sciences.

Secondly, the perspective of most of these international students about Finland is positive. They evaluate that Finland is a good and safe place to work with good life standard, good working conditions and high salary.

Thirdly, all international students who have graduated from universities of applied sciences in Finland from degree programmes in tourism and hospitality expect to find a job corresponding with their education. However, they also agree that it is not very easy getting employed in Finland after graduation. Majority of these students hold positive expectations about their salary level, working condition and job prospect.

Fourthly, the biggest obstacle faced by international students in Finland is the lack of language skills – especially Finnish skills. The other main difficulties that affect them are high competition, lack of experiences, lack of recommendation and society. In order to support their students overcome these obstacles, all of the universities of applied sciences have provided them with Finnish language courses and internships as a part of the study.

Finally, it is recommended that universities of applied sciences can be more supportive to international students in their employment after graduation by having more connection with organizations and companies that can offer more op-

portunities of internship and employment after graduation. Employment supporting centre under universities of applied sciences giving orientation and advices for international students in job searching process is also a good idea. Last but not but least, the quality of Finnish course in universities of applied sciences, according to some students' recommendation, should be improved to be more practical.

### **Recommendation for further research**

As mentioned earlier in the section *1.3. Scope and limitations*, the scope of this thesis was only limited to international students who have graduated or are going to graduate soon from universities of applied sciences degree programmes related to Tourism and Hospitality that have desires of staying in Finland and entering Tourism and Hospitality industry. Hence, further researches on international students from universities of applied sciences degree programmes in other fields or Finnish students from the same degree programmes are recommended to be carried out in order to see the differences between employment expectations and obstacles of international students of tourism and of other groups of students.

Moreover, since the thesis only concerned the point of view of international students as employees entering the industries, the authors believed that 'employers' perspectives of international students is also an interesting topic. Researches on employers' expectations on international students and the obstacles of hiring international students should also be carried on in order to give readers an overall picture of Finnish labour market in tourism and hospitality industries toward not only international student educated in universities of applied sciences but also other higher institutions.



## **Figures**

Figure 1. Thesis structure, p.8

Figure 2. Youth unemployment 2009-2012: Europe and other relevant economies, p.11

Figure 3. The paragraphs of foreign tourists in Finland in 2012, p.14

Figure 4. Student mobility in different countries, p.21

Figure 5. Distribution of international students by field of education, p.22

Figure 6. Status of international graduate's first employment in Finland, p.26

Figure 7. Professional fields of graduates' current jobs, p.27

## **Tables**

Table 1. Country of citizenship, p.40

Table 2. Name of UAS, p.41

Table 3. Name of degree, p.42

Table 4. Reasons of staying in Finland, p.44

Table 5. Work experiences of respondents, p.46

Table 6. Current jobs of the respondents, p.46

Table 7. Descriptive Statistic of International student's expectations, p.49

Table 8. Evaluations toward the statement 'less competition', p.50

Table 9. Descriptive statistic of international student's obstacles, p.51

## **Charts**

Chart 1. Time of living in Finland, p.40

Chart 2. Year of graduation, p.43

Chart 3. Languages skills of the respondents, p.45

Chart 4. How is finding jobs in Finland, p.47

Chart 5: Evaluation toward statement 'lack of languages skills' by nationalities, p.52

## References

ASU 2008. Employment Type Definition & Benefits Eligibility Summary. [http://www.asu.edu/hr/documents/employee\\_definitions\\_benefits\\_eligibility.pdf](http://www.asu.edu/hr/documents/employee_definitions_benefits_eligibility.pdf). Accessed on 10 March 2014.

Business Dictionary. Definition of 'employee'. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/employee.html>. Accessed on 23 March 2014.

CIMO 2012a. Do international students in higher education stay in Finland after graduation? [http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime\\_product\\_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26561\\_FactsExpress2b2012.pdf](http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26561_FactsExpress2b2012.pdf). Accessed on 27 January 2014.

CIMO 2012b. Student mobility in Finland keeps increasing. [http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime\\_product\\_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/30179\\_Student\\_mobility\\_in\\_Finland\\_keeps\\_increasing\\_.pdf](http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/30179_Student_mobility_in_Finland_keeps_increasing_.pdf). Accessed on 27 January 2014.

Dyck, A. 2011. Students' Wage and Employment Expectations. [http://www.tru.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/UREAP\\_Andrew\\_Dyck24385.pdf](http://www.tru.ca/__shared/assets/UREAP_Andrew_Dyck24385.pdf). Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Estelle, M. 2004. The meaning of work in modern time. 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Human Resource Management, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. [http://web.hec.ca/criteos/fichiers/upload/MOW\\_in\\_MTimes\\_EMM200804.pdf](http://web.hec.ca/criteos/fichiers/upload/MOW_in_MTimes_EMM200804.pdf). Accessed on 27 March 2014.

Finnips 2014. Entrance Examinations outside of Finland. <http://finnips.fi/>. Accessed on 28 May 2014.

Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture a. Education policy. <http://www.okm.fi/OPM/Koulutus/koulutuspolitiikka/?lang=en>. Accessed on 27 January 2014.

Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture b. Education. Polytechnic education in Finland. <http://www.okm.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/?lang=en>. Accessed on 27 March 2014.

Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture c. Education. Polytechnic education. Studies and Degrees. [http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/opiskelu\\_ja\\_tutkinnot/?lang=en](http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/opiskelu_ja_tutkinnot/?lang=en). Accessed on 27 March 2014.

Heikkillä, E. 2012. Labour Market Participation of Immigrants in Finland and its Regions.

Herman, E. 2011. The impact of economic growth process on Employment in European Union countries.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.232.8497&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Accessed on 27 March 2014.

iStudent City 2009. Career and Job Hunting Tips and Advice. [http://www.istudentcity.com/career/career\\_tips\\_basic.asp](http://www.istudentcity.com/career/career_tips_basic.asp). Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Lockwood, A and Medlik, S. 2001. Tourism and Hospitality in the 21 Century. Great Britain: MPG books Ltd Cornwall.

MARA (Finnish Hospitality Association) 2012. Development of hotel and restaurant in Finland (Matkailu ja Ravintola Mara r). <http://www.mara.fi/ext/cms3/attachments/suhdannekatsaus-mara.pdf>. Accessed on 12 March 2014.

MARA (Finnish Hospitality Association) 2014 . Hospitality Industry. <http://www.mara.fi/hospitality-industry/>. Accessed on 12 March 2014.

MarketLine 2012 Finland, In-depth PESTLE insights. Country Profile Series.

Ministry of Education and Culture. Polytechnic education in Finland. <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/?lang=en>. Accessed on 27 March 2014.

OECD 2008: p.351. Education at a Glance 2007: OECD Indicators. Paris, France. <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/41284038.pdf>. Accessed on 21 February 2014.

OECDiLibrary 2014. International mobility. [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/sti\\_scoreboard-2011-en/03/05/index.html?contentType=/ns/Chapter,/ns/StatisticalPublication&itemId=/content/chapter/sti\\_scoreboard-2011-26-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/20725345&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/sti_scoreboard-2011-en/03/05/index.html?contentType=/ns/Chapter,/ns/StatisticalPublication&itemId=/content/chapter/sti_scoreboard-2011-26-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/20725345&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html) . Accessed on 21 February 2014.

Oxford Dictionaries. Definition of hospitality in English. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/hospitality>. Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Pasquali, V 2012. Unemployment rate in Countries around the World. Global Finance. <http://www.gfmag.com/component/content/article/119-economic-data/12384-worlds-unemployment-ratescom.html#axzz2xHbDzlqZ>. Accessed on 24 March 2014.

Population Reference Bureau 2012. 2012 World Population Data Sheet. Washington DC: Population Reference Bureau, p.8, 12.

Powers, T.F., & Barrows,C.W., 2006. Introduction to management in the hospitality industry. Hoboken: Wiley.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. Research methods for business students. England: Pearson Educational Limited.

SER 2013. SER Knowledge Café with international students. <http://www.ser.nl/en/publications/news/20130329-foreign-talent-is-encountering-obstacles.aspx>. Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Shumilova, Y., Cai, Y. & Pekkola, E. 2012. Employability of International Graduates Educated in Finnish Higher Education Institutions. <http://www.studentintegration.fi/summary/#/1/>. Accessed on 27 March 2014.

Statistics Canada 2011. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2010006/def/intlstudent-etudiantetranger-eng.htm>. Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Statistics Finland 2012. Migration 2011. [http://www.stat.fi/til/muutl/2011/muutl\\_2011\\_2012-04-27\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/muutl/2011/muutl_2011_2012-04-27_tie_001_en.html). Accessed on 26 February 2014.

Study in Finland 2009. More foreign students than ever in Finnish higher education institutions. [http://www.studyinfinland.fi/front\\_page\\_news/101/0/more\\_foreign\\_students\\_than\\_ever\\_in\\_finnish\\_higher\\_education\\_institutions\\_3](http://www.studyinfinland.fi/front_page_news/101/0/more_foreign_students_than_ever_in_finnish_higher_education_institutions_3). Accessed on 26 February 2014.

Study in Finland 2014. Polytechnics provide professional higher education. [http://www.studyinfinland.fi/where\\_to\\_study/polytechnics](http://www.studyinfinland.fi/where_to_study/polytechnics). Accessed on 27 March 2014.

Sundberg, J. 2011. Finland. European Journal of Political Research: 50, p.965-969. Hoboken: Wiley.

Swain, S.K. and Mishra, J.M. 2012. Tourism Principles and Practices. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2012. Finland: Country report. London: Economist Intelligence Unit Limited.

The Official Travel site of Finland 2012. <http://www.visitfinland.com/about-finland/travel-information>. Accessed on 24 February 2014

The University of Sydney 2013. International Students - Get Noticed! [http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/careercentred/2012/09/international\\_students\\_get\\_not\\_1.html](http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/careercentred/2012/09/international_students_get_not_1.html). Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Tilastokeskus 2007. Ammattikorkeakoulujen opiskelija- ja tutkintomäärät laskivat hieman vuonna 2006. [http://www.stat.fi/til/akop/2006/akop\\_2006\\_2007-04-13\\_tie\\_001.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/akop/2006/akop_2006_2007-04-13_tie_001.html). Accessed on 7 April 2014.

.Tilastokeskus 2014. Oppilaitosten opiskelijat ja tutkinnot 2012. [http://www.stat.fi/til/opiskt/2012/opiskt\\_2012\\_2014-01-29\\_fi.pdf](http://www.stat.fi/til/opiskt/2012/opiskt_2012_2014-01-29_fi.pdf). Accessed on 7 April 2014.

TNS Opinion and Social 2012. Europeans and their languages. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_386\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf). Accessed on 5 May 2014.

Trading Economics. Finland Unemployment rate. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/finland/unemployment-rate>. Accessed on 23 March 2014.

Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014. Matkailun merkitys Suomen kansantaloudelle. [https://www.tem.fi/yritykset/matkailu/matkailun\\_merkitys\\_suomen\\_kansantaloudelle](https://www.tem.fi/yritykset/matkailu/matkailun_merkitys_suomen_kansantaloudelle). Accessed on 7 April 2014.

United Nations 2013. 2013 World Economic Situation and Prospects. [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp\\_current/wesp2013.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/wesp2013.pdf). Accessed on 23 April 2014.

University World News 2009. GLOBAL: What defines an international student? <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20090917182725104>. Accessed on 24 February 2014.

Virginia Tech 2009. Job search issues for International students. <http://www.career.vt.edu/InternationalStudents/Index.html>. Accessed on 24 February 2014.

World Tourism Organisation UNWTO 1995. Collection of tourism expenditure statistic. p.1. <http://pub.unwto.org/WebRoot/Store/Shops/Infoshop/Products/1034/1034-1.pdf>. Accessed on February 2014.

WTTC 2013. Travel and Tourism economy impact 2013. [http://www.wttc.org/site\\_media/uploads/downloads/world2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/world2013_1.pdf). Accessed on 28 May 2014.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Questionnaire survey

Appendix 2: Interview questions

**Appendix 1****QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY*****Employment Expectations and Obstacles for International Students after Graduating in Tourism and Hospitality from Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland***

*This questionnaire is carried out in order to collect material for the thesis of La Linh Giang and Nobel Mohammad from Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. Please fill your answers carefully. Your answer is very important for my research.*

**1. What is your gender?** ☐ Male ☐ Female

**2. What is your age?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. In which country you were born?** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is your father's highest level of education?**

☐ Primary education

☐ Lower secondary education

☐ Upper secondary education

☐ Vocational education

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

☐ Postgraduate education

☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. What is your father's occupation?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. What is your father's highest level of education?**

☐ Primary education

☐ Lower secondary education

- ☐ Upper secondary education      ☐ Vocational education  
☐ Bachelor's degree      ☐ Master's degree  
☐ Postgraduate education  
☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**7. What is your mother's occupation?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. How long have you been living in Finland? \_\_\_\_\_ years**

**9. Which University of Applied Sciences you study or graduated from?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. What is your degree program name?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**11. What is your year of graduation/estimated graduation year? \_\_\_\_\_**

**12. What are your previous work experiences? (Please mention maximum four most relevant ones)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**13. Evaluate your language skills in the table below:**

	Native	Excellent	Good	Sufficient	Basics	Not at all
Finnish						
English						
Russian						



German						
Other_____						

**14. Why you wanted / want to stay in Finland? (Please mention the three most important reasons)**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Where do you work at the moment and what is your title?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**16. Is your work connected with Tourism/Hospitality studies?**

\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_no

**17. Is that the type of work you were expecting /expect after graduation?**

\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_no

**18. If no, what type of work you were expecting /expect after graduation?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**19. Evaluate how much you agree with the following statements. ( 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strong agree)**

**When searching for work after graduation, I expect to get...**

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Easier time finding work					
Higher salary					
Work in my own field					
Better opportunities					
Good position					
Less competition					
Work in multinational company					

**20. How is finding work in Finland in general?**

Very easy ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very difficult

**21. Evaluate how big obstacles the following were for you when searching for work. ( 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)**

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Lack of Finnish skills					
Lack of other language skills					
Lack of experience					
Lack of education					
Lack of recommendations					

Lack of trust towards foreigners					
Lack of support from government					
Low salary					
High competition					
Too challenging tasks					
Too much responsibility					
Bad work conditions					
Difficulties in working documents					
Racism					
Other (please specify) _____					

***Thank you very much for your answers!***

## Appendix 2

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

*Employment Expectations and Obstacles for International Students after Graduating in Tourism and Hospitality from Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland*

**Date:**

**Interviewee name:**

**Place of the interview:**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. In which country were you born?
4. How long have you been living in Finland?
5. In which University of Applied Sciences have you finished your bachelor degree in Tourism/ Hospitality?
6. What is your year of graduation / estimated graduation?
7. What is your mother's highest level of education?
8. What is your mother's occupation?
9. What is your father's highest level of education?
10. What is your father's occupation?
11. What are your previous work experiences? Have you worked during studying?
12. What is your language level?

### **PERSPECTIVES**

13. How would you describe shortly Finland as a work place?
14. Why do you want to stay in Finland?

## **EXPECTATIONS**

- 15. What are your expectations about job after graduation?**
- 16. Where do you work at the moment and what is your title?**
- 17. Does the job meet your expectation?**

**(Discuss)**

## **OBSTACLES**

- 18. What are the main obstacles you have to face? (when finding job/ when interviewing/ when working ...)**
- 19. How have you overcome these barriers?**
- 20. Does your study in University of Applied Sciences support you on overcoming these obstacles? How?**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 21. What do you think about opportunities for international students graduated from Universities of Applied Sciences working in Hospitality and Tourism industries in Finland?**
- 22. Do you think your study in Universities of Applied Sciences useful for your career?**
- 23. What do you think the Universities of Applied Sciences can improve in order to support their international students from Hospitality and Tourism departments who want to work in Finland more?**